

RANGEFINDER

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Kirsten Stidsholt works with crafts that are usually male-dominated on the small island of Fanø where there is a long history of sailors and self-dependent women.

Photo by Mads Joakim Rimer Rasmussen

Kay Chin Tay's tips on fighting fatigue

WORDS OF WISDOM

amy schaffer

Kay Chin Tay sits down at his computer, eager to get started with Team Chapnick's daily meeting. For his co-faculty members in California and Washington, D.C., the sun is almost at its highest point in the sky. For Tay, it is midnight, and the night has just begun.

Tay puts mid-week fatigue to shame.

"What turned out to be a maybe six to seven hour commitment became a lot longer," Tay says. "That makes it very much a 24-hour workshop."

The time difference is straining, but Tay is no stranger to working against his natural circadian rhythm. He likens the late night workshop hours to waking up at 3 a.m. Singapore time to watch a football game happening at 4 p.m. in America.

He is the only faculty member to have a time zone difference greater than two hours, but seven of 27 participants at this year's workshop live in a time zone difference of at least six hours from Central Daylight Time, the time zone in which MPW operates.

Though getting rest may prove to be a challenge for these photographers, Tay feels that the 2020 and 2021 MPW Hometown Edition workshops have kept him alert.

"What people have been saying about the lack of concentration [online], I find it totally quite the opposite," Tay says. "You're able to look at that person face-to-face and you can tell right away if I'm falling asleep. If you're in a dark room in say, any Missouri town where there are 50 people, you could be dozing off and nobody would know."

Tay remembers how thin he spread himself out as a first-time faculty member last year. "I probably didn't know how to say 'no' at that time," Tay says. "If anyone wanted a meeting, I'd say, 'Sure, text me.' Maybe my body is complaining, but I'm not complaining."

This year, he has a better idea of what to expect from the virtual MPW experience. He is less worried about his students' bodies tiring out from being awake, however, and more

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attentive to their mental well-being, especially as the workshop comes to its halfway point.

"I think if they burn out, it's not because of the physical work," he says. "A lot of [my students last year] were psychologically, emotionally, just drained – some because of the interaction with the subject – because it's very intense. I think there were people who were working on stories that were quite depressing."

Tay believes that once students become less self-critical of their photos throughout the week, the fatigue might start to feel less brutal. He emphasizes that MPW is not a competition where participants should tire themselves out trying to win; it is instead a time to get re-inspired, refreshed and "take a break from everything else" in life.

"Slow down. It's okay."



via Kay Chin Tay

"There is such power in the humanity of 'everyday' narratives that document one person but speak to and for many."

HER TIME IN ELDON, MPW.69

terra fondriest

Upon arrival at the Missouri Photo Workshop, I was filled with that nerve rattling, gut twisting adrenaline that told me this was just the challenge I needed at that point to bring my work to the next level. But, at the same time, I was fighting the urge to flee because I knew no one in the photojournalism world, no one at the workshop and had never photographed outside my family before. The thought of being thrown to the wolves, sent out to find a story in an unfamiliar community, was terrifying and exhilarating at the same time. I did the only thing I knew to do, I brought muffins and hoped for the best. On the first day, I set out on foot in town and found someone sitting on their porch to talk to, I remember thinking, "Well, here goes nothing."

Long story short, I got up the nerve to talk with strangers in the capacity of photojournalism

on that day. I gained the confidence to (awkwardly but honestly) communicate with people, making the connections that lead to finding stories, and sincerely listening to what people have to say. To me, there's nothing more uncomfortable than asking someone you don't know if you can infiltrate their life with your camera, and making the case why their story is important to tell. In that uncomfortable awkwardness though, is magic. It's the vulnerability that the situation demands in order to ask for vulnerability in return. In no way do I have the right to enter anyone's life with my camera, that's an honor that can only be bestowed by that person.

Fast forward to present day, four years post MPW, I honestly can't say that those nerves ever die down. I also don't think it would be good if they did. I now photograph people

within my community on a regular basis as part of a long-term project I call Ozark Life. It's something that logistically works for me as a mom because I can do it as time allows and it's close to home. Making connections has become easier the more people I've gotten to know and the more my photography and intentions become known. The story possibilities right out my front door have grown to the point where I feel like I'm just at the tip of the iceberg. There is such power in the humanity of 'everyday' narratives that document one person but speak to and for many.

My advice is to embrace the support, guidance and inspiration that you are surrounded with this week in your MPW environment with the vulnerability you are asking of your story - in that lies your potential for growth.



With a large muscular physique, tattoos running the length of his arm and a goatee down to his chest, most people wouldn't guess that Phil Ponder answers to a 3-week-old kitten named Crackle. And a twenty-pound dog named Baby. And chickens.

Photo by Terra Fondriest

Terra Fondriest is a documentary photographer living in the Ozark hills of Arkansas with her husband, 2 kids and flock of animals. She graduated with a BS degree in Natural Resources from the University of Illinois in 2004, working jobs in that field until motherhood changed her course in 2011. She slowly but steadily began learning to tell visual stories and has gone on to become a freelance photographer for major US publications based in the rural Ozarks region of the US. For the most part, her daily activities include but are not limited to: making sure everyone in her family is fed and where they need to be, the dogs are petted, the garden watered, and that the stories of the Ozarks are being told.

Workshop participant Andreea Campeanu

THE CAMERA IS A PASSPORT

cianna morales

“My first day was very full, because I started in a very different time zone,” said Andreea Campeanu, photographer and videographer.

Not only was her day full — it was partially nocturnal.

Based in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, Campeanu watched the workshop welcome at 2 a.m. local time. After going to meetings with her team, she went to sleep around six in the morning. Then, on Monday, she spent time with the family she wants to photograph, before going to more team meetings and finally wrapping up at 9 p.m.

It’s all in a day’s work for the participants. Campeanu is one of the seven photographers with a time difference greater than six hours between their base of operations and the workshop’s Central Daylight Time. She is one of 11 photographers based outside of the U.S.

Campeanu is no stranger to traversing borders in the course of her work. After visiting friends in South Sudan, she ended up staying and spending almost five years in total. She went to see “the newest country in the world” — South Sudan gained its independence July 9, 2011.

“I liked living there, I liked the heat, the never-ending summer,” she said.

Campeanu wasn’t planning on covering conflict when she moved to South Sudan, but when civil war broke out in 2013, she photographed the turmoil.

Friends in South Sudan still ask Campeanu when she’s coming home.

Campeanu continued her work in Africa when a month-long visit to a friend in Madagascar turned into a year-and-a-half stay. After ten years of traveling and living abroad, she has returned to her home country Romania, where she wants to do longer-form photo stories.

Campeanu hopes her story for the workshop will be a springboard for a longer project about the Afro-Romanian community, how families navigate race and nationality in a predominantly white country.



Jessica Roman, 8, looks out the window as she heads to a birthday party in Cluj-Napoca, Romania Photo by Andreea Campeanu

Campeanu’s work in international spaces is informed by her master’s degree in visual anthropology. “I like the conversations about representation and different dilemmas, like othering,” she said.

This academic perspective helped her to critically evaluate her role as a white photojournalist documenting political change and struggle in Africa.

Campeanu joined the workshop with the hope of honing her storytelling. She’s in a new professional landscape

following her return to Romania, and it seems apparent that she’s working to push her photography to the next level as well.

Campeanu said she’s wanted to do Missouri Photo Workshop for years. “I heard it’s the best,” she said. “I think this is going to help me in the future to better tell stories,” Campeanu said. “I’m trying to navigate things that I’ve learned to navigate in other places, but I don’t know them here. Things like things like access and seeing stories, seeing what can be interesting

for an audience beyond what I’m personally interested in.”

One of Campeanu’s favorite things about photography is “the passport.”

“The camera is giving you a passport to other people’s lives,” Campeanu said. “The fact that you can meet so many different people, and be in so many different situations, and try to be truthful to the people you’re photographing and to the story, and document injustice — that’s just moving.”



Andreea Campeanu is a photographer and videographer currently living in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. She does news and documentary photography and video, as well as collaborative experimental video-art, and she has a MA in Visual Anthropology from Free University in Berlin. Her work often focuses on documenting issues related to displacement and the effects of conflict. She has covered the ramifications of war in South Sudan and Central African Republic. Some of her clients included Getty Images, Reuters, AFP, Vanity Fair France, Grazia France, Liberation (Fr.), The New Humanitarian, Al Jazeera, Globe and Mail, The UN, MSF, Mercy Corps, Marie Stopes, National Geographic Magazine Romania, Esquire Romania.