

# 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



# Words from Bill Marr

## THE ART OF SELF-EDITING

cianna morales

Every photographer knows editing their own work can sometimes be a challenge. The roles of the photographer and the editor are distinct, and trying to wear both hats at the same time can lead to conflicting impulses.

“You have to think as someone who hasn’t seen the story yet,” said Marco Postigo Storel, workshop participant. “That’s the hardest thing, because you’re already attached to the photoshoot.”

Bill Marr, faculty for Missouri Photo Workshop on Team Eppridge, has a long career in photography and editing. He served as creative director of National Geographic magazine and The Nature Conservancy’s director of photography. He was the College Photographer of the Year in 1976 and worked as a staff photographer at the Columbia Daily Tribune until he morphed into a picture editing and designer role.



Bill Marr at the MPW headquarters in Sept. 2018.

Photo by Jenna Kieser

Marr has some advice for photographers editing their own work. The first challenge might be the emotions a photographer attaches to their images.

“When you say you have a hard time picking your best pictures, is it because you love them all, or you hate them all?” Marr asked. Both can lead to pitfalls.

Jessi Dodge, MPW Vortex Lead and photojournalist at the Buffalo (Wyoming) Bulletin, said she struggles with separating from her role as a photographer and looking as an editor.

“My bias means I think the photos that were the hardest to take will tell the story the best,” Dodge said.

Marr cautioned against this. “If you went through a lot of work or a big adventure, took days to get a couple of pictures, you’re gonna really try to like them,” he said. “There’s a danger in that, because the photograph doesn’t really talk about what it took to get.”

The opposite problem comes from missing strong images.

“On the other hand, if you’re not feeling confident about your photography, you may not like

anything, even though you’ve got some really good pictures,” Marr said.

This week at the workshop, Dodge and Jennifer Mosbrucker, freelance photo editor and Rangefinder editor, went through Dodge’s work. Dodge said Mosbrucker pulled her portfolio apart, finding strong images on Dodge’s drive that she should include in her website.

“The best thing is to find a friend, a mentor, someone that you can bounce stuff off of, just to get a reality check,” Marr said. He calls this a readership survey. A second person should be able to look at the image and understand it, without words or captions. In many cases, the photo should speak for itself.

“At the Geographic, it was all about, we’re gonna print 6 million copies of this thing, back in the day,” Marr said. “We’re gonna make sure that 6 million people understand this picture.”

“Photography is subjective,” Marr went on to say. “Photography is very personal. Everybody’s gonna react to pictures differently. As much as you may love a picture, it may not

make sense to somebody else.”

Hunter Pendleton, workshop graduate assistant, echoed these thoughts.

“There’s a degree of closeness I get with my work where I feel over-attached to my images,” he said. “Sometimes you have to kill your darlings.”

This is not to say there is no room in your portfolio or on assignment for complex or subjective photos. Marr lists some of his favorite photographers who stand out for their layered and artful work: John Stanmeyer, Alex Webb, David Guttenfelder.

He encourages photographers to take the pictures they were hired for, but also to take chances with creative vision.

“You have to have a good relationship with your picture editor,” Marr said. If you have a different type of picture, your editor will likely listen to you. Whether or not it goes on to publication is a different story, but the conversation is worth having, he said.

Marr emphasized the importance of sequencing. Whenever you have three or more photos on the screen, you should put them in an order that makes sense, he said. Sequencing can help with editing as well: if an excellent image doesn’t fit the narrative, it can be a sign to remove it from the group.

Grouping photos is important as well.

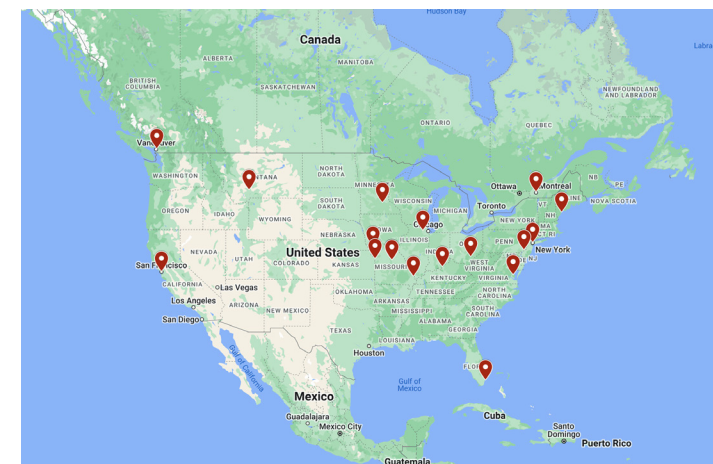
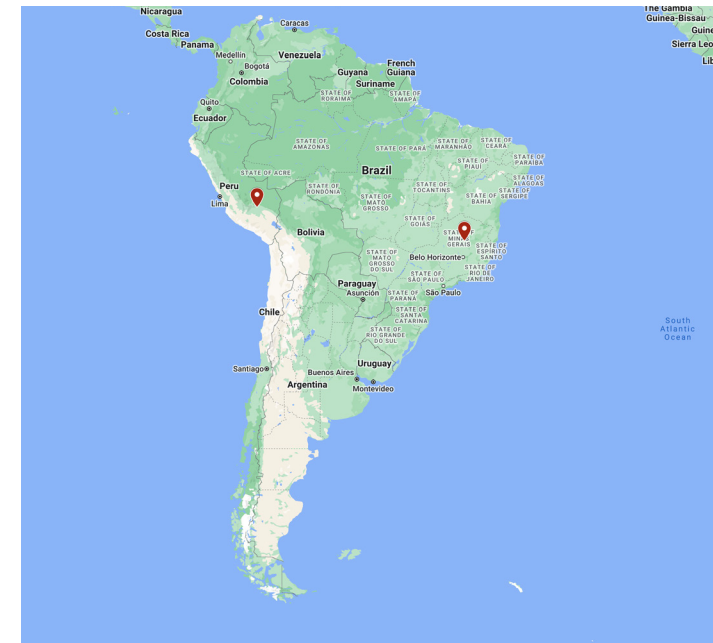
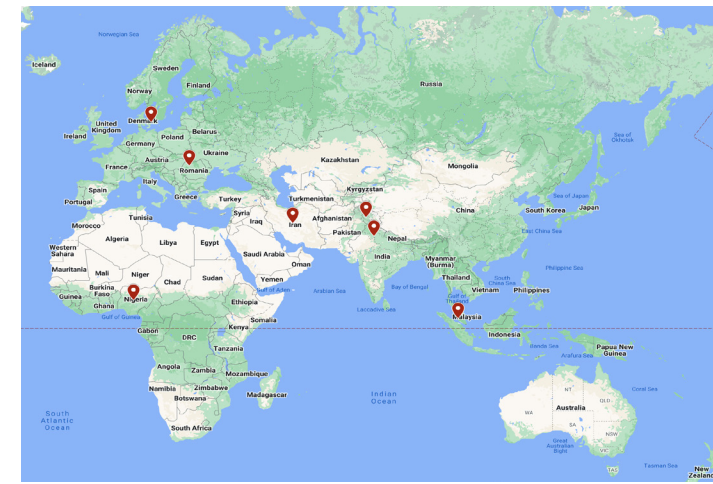
“What we did, when we’re doing a larger story, was to organize the photos into what Sarah (Leen) likes to call buckets,” Marr said.

One bucket might be for landscapes, another for portraits, and still more for working photos or process photos, and so on. When you’re curating ten images for a story, five of those can’t be landscapes. Grouping the photos into categories will help you compare and select the best from each bucket.

Marr’s final piece of advice is to put your work out into the world.

“Publish often,” he said. “Everybody with an Instagram account is a publisher. You’ve got to brand and develop bodies of work so that people can identify you.”

# WHERE ARE MPW.73 PHOTOGRAPHERS BASED?



- Sofia Aldinio
- Anuj Arora
- Gabbie Bhaskar
- Annie Burns-Pieper
- Andreea Campeanu
- Felicia Chang
- Greg Clark
- Chris Day
- Ana Caroline de Lima
- Jon Dykstra
- Austin Johnson
- Irynka Hromotska
- Marco Postigo Storel
- Alexandra Radu
- Mads Joakim Rimer Rasmussen
- Jimena Rodriguez Romani
- Hailey Sadler
- Pamela L. Sherlock
- Vipan Raj Singh
- Paige Southwood
- Maryam Lerit Turaki
- Natosha Via
- Tyger Williams
- Yawen Wu
- James Wyatt
- Marjan Yazdi
- Sarah Yenesel

- South Portland, Maine
- Delhi, India
- New York
- Montreal, Quebec, Canada
- Cluj-Napoca, Romania
- North Vancouver, Canada
- Miami, Florida
- Athens, Ohio
- Minas Gerais, Brazil
- Maryville, MO
- Kansas City, MO
- Columbia, MO
- Columbia, MO
- Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Copenhagen, Denmark
- Cusco, Peru
- Gloucester, Virginia
- New Prague, MN
- Srinagar, Kashmir, India
- Bozeman, Montana
- Abuja, Nigeria
- Louisville, KY
- Philadelphia, Pa.
- Saint Charles, IL
- San Francisco, CA
- Iran
- Cape Girardeau, Missouri



# The lasting impact of the Hometown Edition model

## LOOKING FORWARD

owen ziliak

Over this past week, the 27 photographers participating in MPW.73 have signed in to general sessions from their bedrooms, living rooms, coffee shops and cars. Rather than being dropped into a rural Missouri town and expected to quickly orient themselves, they've scoured their own streets to document the familiar in 400 frames.

While the photojournalists are completing the same general task as previous years, the atmosphere has changed.

"Obviously we're not in the same room together," said MPW co-director Brian Kratzer, "the interpersonal connectivity is all through zoom. What's really great is the team meetings, where all the magic happens... the team meetings are the new hallway conversations."

The MPW production crew has had to adjust to the new virtual experience. "Being isolated in a town is really healthy because it generates that unison, that shared experience," Kratzer said. "It's a little more difficult for the crew to kind of feel that vacuum."

Unlike former years, the crew doesn't get the chance to see the photographers grow and engage in water cooler chats. Given the circumstances, volunteers have been harder to come by. Feedback from last year's Hometown Edition helped improve



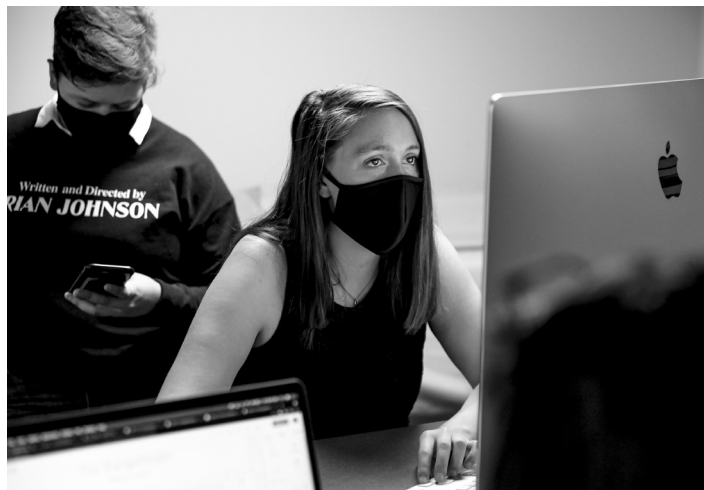
the experience for MPW.73 photographers and faculty, Kratzer says.

"We've become a little bit more sophisticated in our production, a little better at planning and a little better at communicating the needs," Kratzer said. "The first time we weren't really sure how all the pieces we're going to fall together."

Kratzer has big ideas for how this kind of growth will impact future workshops, given the global nature of the virtual model. The virtual workshop has helped them tap into a new audience, he says.

"Now that we've done this, thinking about this experience combined with the hyper-local community experience, everybody can take more away by having this larger, shared experience," Kratzer said. "There is a real opportunity to take this Missouri Photo Workshop method and explore the world with it."

But before all of that, Kratzer wants to get the workshop back in-person. "I would love to be in person next year. When we ended MPW.72 last year, I thought 'alright MPW.73 in-person,' but we ended up virtual again," said Kratzer. "But here I am, hopeful that we are in person next year and hopeful that we retain this virtual reach so other photojournalists in other time zones can experience what this is all about."



Top, Missouri Photo Workshop Director Brian Kratzer and Operations Director Hany Hawasly during a virtual meeting in Columbia, Mo.

At left, MU graduate Jessi Dodge, center, and MU student Madi Winfield work in the MU Photojournalism computer lab.

Photos by Hunter Pendleton