

# RANGEFINDER

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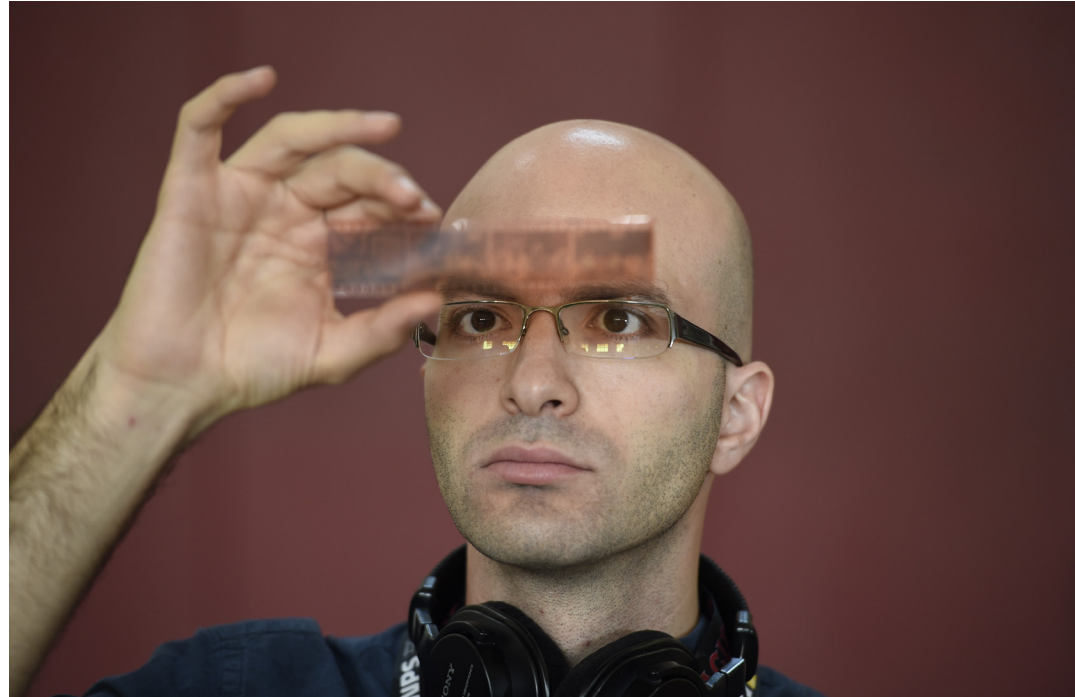
**Joana Scholtz**, the Democratic candidate for the Kansas House of Representatives in District 40, wears her VOTE necklace, made popular by Michelle Obama, in Leavenworth, Kansas.

Photo by Arin Yoon



# Who is Hany Hawasly? THE BRAIN OF MPW

cianna morales



Hawasly looks at a negative strip during MPW.69 in Eldon.

Photo by Mike Krebs

Hany Hawasly, Director of Technology, is a pillar of Missouri Photo Workshop: Hometown Edition. Hawasly is a documentary filmmaker and educator based in New York, and describes the essential function of his role as follows: “Nobody knows I exist unless something goes wrong.”

Or, unless the Rangefinder profiles him. Our readers want to know, who is the person behind the headphones?

Hawasly brings technical expertise and innovation to the workshop, as well as a long-standing passion for the creativity and learning the week represents. A Fulbright scholar from Syria who came to Missouri’s Master of Arts in Journalism program, he began his journey with MPW in his second year as a graduate student, in 2014. He photographed the Trenton workshop, and has been on crew and increasingly in charge of the image handling, storage and overall logistics ever since.

“My job is to make technology invisible,” Hawasly said. He said this allows the faculty to focus on teaching and stories.

When the workshop was in person, Hawasly helped with scouting out towns, setting up a network computer system for turning in photos and all the audio and visual for presentations.

“The biggest challenge of doing technology for MPW is, you’re traveling every time to a place where you have zero control over what you’ll find,” Hawasly said. “You’re totally dependent on the infrastructure of that town.”

He described overcoming slow WiFi and setting up screens, projection, and sound in cavernous high school gymnasiums. Hawasly always wants to show the images in presentations to their best advantage — this is a visual workshop, after all.

This year, instead of setting up a network of computers, the challenge was building a digital infrastructure and figuring out the best way to stream both presentations and meetings. G-Suite takes over for the computer network, YouTube Live offers the highest visual quality for the presentations and Zoom — the

quarantine classic — functions for meetings. Hawasly brings technical expertise to MPW, which he has refined in the past six months of COVID-19 as the operations and technical director of New York’s chapter of the Video Consortium. Making sure this professional organization was able to continue its work throughout the summer — which centered around enhancing the diversity of the documentary film industry — informed Hawasly’s plan for running MPW smoothly.

Hawasly’s tendency toward both creative and technical acumen goes back even further; he has been ambidextrous in this way since an early age. Growing up in Damascus, Syria, as the child of a math teacher and an art major, Hawasly said he was always selected for both math and art in academic competitions when he was in grade school. “Part of me wants to be precise and calculated, and the other part of me wants to be artsy and messy,” he said.

Hawasly went on to study math in undergrad, and started teaching himself photography in the early aughts. In 2009, he created a

photo story about silk-making in Syria—but around that time felt he had hit a wall in photography and believed he could not learn more on his own. He applied for a Fulbright fellowship, which brought him to the University of Missouri to study photojournalism and documentary filmmaking.

Hawasly also spent the decade from 2002-2012 as a member of the Red Crescent in Syria. He joined because he was fascinated by first aid, survival techniques and helping people by providing lifesaving care. As a paramedic and a first aid instructor, Hawasly found a sense of community within humanitarian work. This experience, he said, also enhanced his interest in journalism. There is a dearth of media or free press in Syria, Hawasly said, but a humanitarian organization relies on communicating their mission through imagery and storytelling.

Reflecting on his experience of moving to the U.S., Hawasly said he appreciated living in the Midwest for several years during and after graduate school. “I think that allowed me to understand this country better,” he said. Visiting rural towns in Missouri augmented this.

“Even in the smallest spaces, the smallest places, you can find some of the biggest stories,” Hawasly said.

The workshop is an important reminder of that concept.

Now, teaching multimedia storytelling at New York University, Hawasly said he conveys to his students lessons he has gathered from MPW over the years. MPW holds a place in his heart as being life-changing and the presentations, projects, faculty and students are what keep him coming back year after year.

“You have these people, in this small space, and everybody is doing their damn best,” Hawasly said. “I always like to be part of that experience—not only to witness, but to help make it happen.”



Hany Hawasly participated in MPW.65 in Trenton, MO. While there he met Lovie Johnson who showed him why she is called the “Nicest Lady in Town.”



# MIDWEST HOME FOR BOSWORTH

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For MPW's resident Nikon representative of eight years, the workshop is a place of community and family.

Kris Bosworth's first Missouri workshop experience was at MPW 65 in Trenton. She was already experienced with the photo workshop circuit: the Eddie Adams and Mountain workshops are among her top fall engagements. Still, Bosworth said she was struck by MPW's uniqueness and structure.

"I was fascinated by the courage it takes to go out and find a story," she said. "I could never do that. I think I was just completely taken aback by that process"

The environment MPW creates for its students, faculty and crew also makes the workshop unique, according to Bosworth.

"I think Missouri builds a family and sense of community that's not like any other," she said. "I always get there (Missouri) and Jim Curley says 'Welcome home,' and it always



From left counter-clockwise, Maggie Steber, Lois Raimondo, Maryanne Golon, and Kris Bosworth enjoy a drink during a break at MPW.66 in Platte City.

makes me feel really good."

One of her most prominent memories of the workshop is when the mayor of Platte City took her out to lunch. She hadn't won an award, nor was she lobbying for some sort of cause. He just needed help with his camera.

Originally from Long Island, Bosworth said without the workshop, she probably wouldn't have been able to see rural Missouri. People from the coasts don't really travel through Mid-America unless they are driving and being able to explore and travel throughout

Missouri is one of her favorite parts of the workshop, she said.

The Saturday open house has a special place in her heart. More than just being a welcoming atmosphere for its participants, the workshop brings people from the host towns together to share and rejoice in their stories.

"There's absolutely no place else where you can put out all those photographs at the end of the workshop and have the public come in and you meet the story and see their reactions to what the photographer has created," she said. "That part is so endearing. I would never miss a Saturday morning."

This year, Kris is following MPW from her home in Florida. She finds herself wishing she was in one of those small Missouri towns experiencing the workshop's familiar buzz.

"It's always exhausting and it's always over too soon," Bosworth said. "I really miss it."

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## DAILEY'S DAILY ADVICE

advice from Duane Dailey as seen in Rangefinders from years past.



"You must become conscious of all distractions. While sitting quietly in the corner, you must plot. Where should you be to have the best angle to tell the story?"

Duane Dailey  
MPW.70, Rangefinder 4