

On Street Photography



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Street Photography

Street photography is a genre of photography that features subjects in candid situations within public places and does not necessitate the presence of a street or even the urban environment. 'Street' simply refers to a place where human activity can be seen, a place to observe and capture social interaction.

The subject can even be absent of any people and can be that of object or environment where an object projects a human character or an environment is decidedly human.

Framing and timing are key aspects of the craft, with the aim of creating images at a decisive or poignant moment. Alternatively, the street photographer may seek a more prosaic depiction of the scene, as a form of social documentary.

Much of what is now widely regarded, stylistically and subjectively, as definitive street photography was made in the era spanning the end of the 19th Century through to the late 1970s; a period which saw the emergence of portable cameras.

During the course of its evolution, street photography has provided a diverse and detailed record of street culture. The advent of digital photography, combined with the exponential growth of photo-sharing via the internet, has greatly expanded an awareness of the genre and its practitioners.



Origin

Paris is widely accepted as the birthplace of street photography. The cosmopolitan city helped to define street photography as a genre and the photography helped to form the city as well.

Eugene Atget, is regarded as the father of the genre, not because he was the first of his kind, but from his popularity as a Parisian photographer. As the city did, Atget helped to promote the city streets as a worthy subject for photography. He worked in the city of Paris from the 1890s to the 1920s. His subject matter consisted mainly of architecture; stairs, gardens, and windows. He did photograph some workers but it is clear people were not his main focus.

John Thomson, a Scotsman, began photographing the street prior to Atget, and had more of a subject aware style in comparison to Atget. Though he does not receive the same amount of accreditation, Thomson was vital in the transition from photographing only high class, manufactured portraits to capturing everyday life on the streets.

Henri Cartier-Bresson, who has a reputation comparable to Atget, was a 20th century photographer whose style focused on the actions of people.

He was responsible for the idea of taking a picture at the ideal moment. He was influenced by his interest in traditional art, as he desired to be a painter. This influence comes through in his skill of combining timing and technique.

The beginnings of street photography in the United States can be linked to that of jazz in the music domain, both emerging as outspoken depictions of everyday life. This connection is visible in the work of the New York School of Photography.

The New York School was not a formal institution, but rather comprised groups of photographers in the mid-20th century based in New York City. One of its most notable photographers, Robert Frank was a part of the beat movement interested in Black-American and counter cultures. Frank rose to fame partly on account of his popular book, *The Americans*. Raw and often out of focus, his images questioned mainstream photography of the time, such as Ansel Adams's landscapes.

The mainstream photography community in America fiercely rejected Frank's work, but it would later become a stepping stone for fresh photographers looking to break away from the restrictions of the old style.

Technique

Most kinds of portable camera are used for street photography; for example rangefinders, digital and film SLRs, and point-and-shoot cameras. A commonly used focusing technique is zone focusing — setting a fixed focal distance and shooting from that distance — as an alternative to autofocus, particularly using wide angle lenses with their increased depth of field.

Zone focusing also facilitates shooting 'from the hip' i.e. without bringing the camera up to the eye. Alternatively waist-level finders and the tiltable LCD screens of digital cameras allow for composing the shot or adjusting focus without bringing attention to the photographer.

Street Photography vs. Documentary Photography

Street photography and documentary photography are two very similar genres of photography that often overlap while having distinct individual qualities. Street photography has the ability to document while documentary has the definite intention of recording history. Documentary photography can be candid, but street photography is defined by its candidness. Street photography produces ironic amusement while documentary provides emotional intensity.

Documentary style is defined by its premeditated message and intention of documenting particular events in history. The documentary approach includes aspects of journalism, art, education, sociology and history. In documentary's social investigation, often the images are intended to pave way to social change. Documentary's underlying motives complicate its ability to give a clear, impartial vision of the world.

Ten Quick Tips



1. Always carry your camera with you

Always carry a camera as a great street picture can be found anywhere. The technology comes to us with cameras more compact and transportable. No matter if it is a mirror-less, an old 35mm or a smartphone.

2. Have your camera ready

The instances do not repeat themselves in street photography. Be ready to shoot is a command in the genre. So your camera settings should be ready in a few seconds to capture every situation: zone focus, hyper-focal or program mode can be effective solutions. If your camera is slow to start consider to keep it turned on: mandatory in this case at least one spare battery. Also a wrist strap is an ideal solution to be ready to shoot.

3. Use an inconspicuous camera bag

It is a matter of personal safety, don't draw too much attention. Several brands of camera bags exist and they offer common looking camera bags which assist avoid sticking out from the crowd.

4. Choose an interesting subject

Sometimes great compositions can be seen but the subjects are not so strong. Strive to find interesting characters or special postures, or really interesting situations that may edge the surreal world.

5. Wide angle prime lens

Street photography is not a safari. So forget about zoom lenses. Ideally one is 'in the scene' and therefore there is no room for a telephoto. Using long lenses will quickly give you away and will result in not getting that special moment for which you went out on the street in the first place. If you still have doubts, ask yourself why all the great reportage photographers were using or use normal or wide angle lenses.

6. Get close

'If your photographs aren't good enough, you're not close enough', according to Robert Capa, the founder of the Magnum agency.

Using a wide-angle prime lens you will be forced to get close to your subjects. Street photography means mental, emotional and physical involvement of the photographer. One cannot think of doing good street photography if remaining in a distance.

7. Think positive

Every single time when you go out shooting try see the potential for at least one world-class photo. They are always out there. But being in the right mental state to capture them is sometimes difficult; especially because street photography can involve long periods where very little happens. So developing that faith and keeping it with you at all times is important. The world will provide if you trust it to. And don't forget to smile! With a smile, people usually respond with a smile!

8. Interesting situations, try go get more shots

When the situation and the subject are interesting try to get more shots if time permits for the situation to last. You might consider changing the position and the viewpoint.

9. Observe the street life

To be a street photographer means you have to be extremely attentive to the frantic activity in public spaces as situations change in the blink of an eye. While walking down the street you will come across a variety of events, acts, postures, gestures, scenes, expressions, subjects, etc.

There is a multitude of possibilities in the street for the photographer but you must remain alert. Remember that photography is above all to observe. Street photography is capturing the activities happening by the roadside, street concerts, traffic signals, billboards, hoardings, fences, trees. It is simply happening everywhere. To put it in the word of Bruce Gilden, 'if it smells of the street is street photography'.

10. Remain respectful

The first question one should ask, would I have problems taking pictures in the same situation a person dear to me, such as one of my family members? Respect of the subject should be the basis of your pictures. Only if you photograph with respect will do good photos.

Photography Foundations

Photography Foundations

- 10 lessons to improve your photography -

Upon course completion, we are convinced that the you have gained the knowledge to bring your photography to a next level improving your images and experience a greater joy in your hobby!

TOPICS:

- A short history of photography
 - Film photography
 - Digital photography
- Genres of photography
 - Focal lengths
 - Shooting modes
 - Colour
 - Black and white
 - Light
 - Composition

for more information visit: <http://www.loveanda35.com>

Famous Street Photographers

A

Christophe Agou

Yūtokutaishi Akiyama

Nobuyoshi Araki

B

James Barnor

Brassaï

C

Henri Cartier-Bresson

Mark Cohen

Joan Colom

Bill Cunningham

D

Maciej Dakowicz

Peter Dench

Robert Doisneau

Ken Domon

Don Donaghy

E

Nikos Economopoulos

Alfred Eisenstaedt

F

Robert Frank

Leonard Freed

G

George Georgiou

Bruce Gilden

Shigeo Gochō

H

Hiroshi Hamaya

Erich Hartmann

Tadahiko Hayashi

I

Yasuhiro Ishimoto

K

Richard Kalvar

Osamu Kanemura

Hiroh Kikai

Ihei Kimura

William Klein

Seiji Kurata

Kineo Kuwabara

L

Jens Olof Lasthein

Guy Le Querrec

Arthur Leipzig

Helen Levitt

M

Vivian Maier

Louis Mendes

Joel Meyerowitz

Inge Morath

Daidō Moriyama

N

Shigeichi Nagano

Masatoshi Naitō

Nek Vardikos

O

Mitsugu Ōnishi

P

Trent Parke

Martin Parr

Mark Powell

R

Raghu Rai

Willy Ronis

S

Boris Savelev

Jamel Shabazz

Irakly Shanidze

W. Eugene Smith

David Solomons

Louis Stettner

S (continue)

Beat Streuli

Issei Suda

Homer Sykes

T

Yutaka Takanashi

Takeyoshi Tanuma

Alexey Titarenko

Toyoko Tokiwa

Haruo Tomiyama

W

Garry Winogrand

Michael Wolf

Tom Wood

Y

Michio Yamauchi

Nakaji Yasui