

## 5 Essential Tips for Layering in Street Photography

### What's poppin' people? It's Dante.

Today I'm giving you the five most important tips for *layering in street photography*. This is a technique I've practiced for over a decade, traveling the world, camera in hand.

Let's keep it simple.

A photograph is the result of **where you position your body** in relation to the subject and the background. And the art of layering? It's not complex—it's *fundamental*.

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### Tip #1: Master Foreground, Middle Ground, and Background

You want to guide the viewer's eye through these three planes.

***“Work from back to front. Set your stage. Let the layers come to you.”***

In **Mumbai, India**, I started with the **background**—a stone wall and window frame. That was my anchor.

- I positioned my body in relationship to the man in the window.
- That's the first layer: the anchor.
- Then I waited as people entered the **foreground**, adding the second layer.
- Finally, I anticipated the bird flying across the **middle of the frame**, completing the third layer.

The frame becomes a *visual feast*. Layering isn't about overcomplicating things—it's about being intentional with **placement, observation, and patience**.

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## Tip #2: Position Yourself Strategically

Use *choke points*. Places like bus stops, alleyways, or corners where people naturally funnel through.

At a **bus stop in Philadelphia**, I:

1. **Noticed the light and shadow** play first—my background anchor.
2. Used the **foreground silhouette** to add impact and proximity.
3. Waited for the subject to enter the **middle ground** beam of light.

***“Photography is visual problem solving.”***

It’s about putting order to chaos. Position your body in the right spot—and things will start to align.

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## Tip #3: Engage with Your Subjects

Don’t be invisible.

In **Napoli**, I spent two hours swimming, sunbathing—just being present with the people. It’s not always about sneaking a shot—it’s about *existing within the world*.

***“By engaging with the subjects at the scene, I gained permission by simply being there and being present.”***

- My **anchor** was a swimmer in the background.
- The **foreground and middle ground** were filled with people interacting with a watermelon.
- I wasn’t thinking about triangles or rule of thirds—I was responding to *life happening in front of me*.

These things *come together naturally* when you’re immersed in the moment.

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## Tip #4: Embrace Chaos and Serendipity

Life is messy. That's the gold mine.

In **Wadi Kelt, Jericho**, a car broke down while I was climbing a mountain. I *hopped out* and responded immediately.

At first, the photo was flat—just the car in the middle ground. But I realized:

- The **car** made for a strong **foreground** element.
- I added **subjects** into the **middle ground**.
- The **blue sky** became the **background**.

***“You must be aware of these different elements and make sense of the chaos.”***

Sometimes, you work from *front to back*. You're not always going to have the luxury of setting a stage. Respond quickly. Be alert.

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## Tip #5: Trust Your Intuition and Be Patient

Layering isn't just a technique. It's a *way of seeing*.

***“You must feel the potential of a photograph.”***

In **Mexico City**, I climbed a ladder and saw a sculpture of Jesus. I sensed the moment.

Here's what happened:

- I set my stage using the sculpture of Jesus as my **anchor**.

- I waited as a man entered the frame with **outstretched arms**, mirroring the statue.
- A dog ran through. A storm cloud rolled in. All of it *clicked*.

***“You’re not always a fly on the wall. Sometimes you’re part of the scene. But once you’ve engaged, you can then step back and observe.”***

These spontaneous relationships—man and sculpture, light and shadow, subject and space—only happen when you’re patient and attuned to the world around you.

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## Final Thoughts

Let’s recap:

1. **Master the foreground, middle ground, and background.**
2. **Position yourself strategically.**
3. **Engage with your subjects.**
4. **Embrace chaos and serendipity.**
5. **Trust your intuition and be patient.**

***“Photography is like visual problem solving.”***

It’s about sensing possibilities, recognizing patterns, and positioning your body where the magic can happen.

Don’t go out there trying to cram complexity into a frame just for the sake of it. Instead, *fill the frame with meaning*. Get close. Be intentional. Work the scene.

***“A lot of the times, I don’t leave the scene until the scene leaves me.”***

Study less. Shoot more. Go live it.

Thanks for reading—and I'll see you in the next one.

**Peace.**