

## Wabi Sabi Street Photography

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

Today we're going to be discussing *Wabi Sabi street photography*—what that means, how you can apply it to your own street photography, and why it's so powerful.

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### The Philosophy of Wabi Sabi

On the cover of this slideshow is a photograph of a Japanese weeping tree.

I work in horticulture and tend these trees often. It's meditative. You witness the way leaves *wither, decay*, and then *bloom again*. Nature is always in flux, always changing—and so are we.

***"Wabi Sabi is about embracing the impermanent nature of life."***

#### What does Wabi Sabi mean?

- **Wabi** — simplicity, humility, connection to nature
- **Sabi** — the beauty of aging, wear, impermanence

Together:

**Wabi Sabi = Beauty in the imperfect, the impermanent, and the incomplete.**

***"Nothing lasts, nothing is finished, and nothing is perfect."***

We're imperfect too—flesh and blood, bound by gravity, full of sorrow, greed, lust. And yet—**our imperfection is perfection.**

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## Photography in Flux

Here's an image I made of peace lilies—one just beginning to bloom, another fully bloomed. Everything is changing. *Everything is impermanent.*

***"Street photography is about finding meaning in the fleeting, in the things most people overlook."***

Like birds in flight at Penn's Landing. Waves crashing behind them. A passing moment. Fleeting. *Gone.*

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## Why Practice Wabi Sabi Street Photography?

Because we already know too much about perfection. We've heard enough about sharpness, flawless exposures, megapixels.

**Wabi Sabi reminds us:**

***"Perfection isn't the goal."***

It's about seeing the world **raw, real, authentic, and spontaneous.**

**Look for:**

- Cracks
- Rust
- Peeling paint
- Shadows and decay
- Signs of life in the worn-out things

***"Imperfection is perfection."***

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## Case Study: The Burning Car

I was walking in Philly, and I saw a car on fire. I was prepared—I made the shot.

That moment embodied Wabi Sabi.

**Everything in flux. Nothing lasts.**

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## Let Life Flow Towards You

*“Walk slower than everyone around you.”*

When you’re walking the streets, don’t hunt. Don’t force it. **Be ready.** Let the street crash into you like a wave. Catch what’s there. That’s Wabi Sabi.

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## How to Photograph Wabi Sabi (Practical Tips)

### 1. Use Program or Macro Mode

I love macro. Get close to the textures. Capture the dew on a leaf in the morning.

### 2. Stop overthinking. Trust your intuition.

Let your eye lead. Feel the image before it happens.

### 3. Look for:

4. Worn leaves

5. Puddles

6. Faded walls

7. Rusted hinges

8. Human presence without the human

### 9. Carry your camera with you. Always.

Let it be your companion in daily life.

**You’re not hunting—you’re living.**

*“Photography becomes a visual diary of your day.”*

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## **Black & White. High Contrast. Ricoh GR.**

- **Black and white strips away distraction.**
- **Crank the contrast to max.**
- **Let the textures shine.**

I use the **Ricoh GR III**. The macro feature is sublime. I shoot **small JPEGs**. That’s all you need. *Keep it raw. Keep it simple.*

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## **You Don’t Need to Travel**

*“Wabi Sabi doesn’t require travel. It requires attention.”*

I’ve photographed all over the world—from Mumbai to Mexico City, from Israel to Zambia. But lately?

- A tattered poster inside the Wanamaker Building
- A chain locked around a pole
- Carved love notes on a tree

**All in my backyard. All just around the corner.**

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## **Walk the Backstreets**

Go where others don't.  
Alleyways. Empty sidewalks.  
**The slower you walk, the more you see.**

***“The more you see, the more you photograph. The more you photograph, the more curious you become.”***

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### **Photography as Meditation**

When I'm shooting, I'm simply **being**.

***“When I'm walking, I exist outside of time.”***

Photography puts me in a Zen-like state. Watching the light. Watching the people move. Seeing **everything**.

I've never made more photos in my life since adopting this mindset.

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### **No Goals. No Preconceived Notions.**

You don't need a theme.  
You don't need a project.  
You don't even need a plan.

**Just wander. Just be. Just make.**

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## **It's Not Just Cracks and Rust**

Wabi Sabi isn't just chipped paint.

It's the *fleeting sunrise*. The *momentary breeze*. The *movement of birds*.

*It's transience itself.*

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## **Final Thoughts**

***"Maybe you can't live forever—but you can make a photograph."***

***"Life is short. Art is forever."***

### **So remember:**

- Embrace the imperfect
- Look for the overlooked
- Photograph with soul
- Let go of control

**Treat the street like a mirror of your own impermanence.**

**And let the photograph be your way of remembering what mattered.**

Thank you for reading.

**Peace.**

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