

Street Photography Breakdown: Part 15

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

Welcome to *Street Photography Breakdown*, Part 15 — where we look at five different photographs, breaking down the compositions and the behind-the-scenes of how they were made.

1. Holi in Mumbai

During my time in Mumbai, I found myself exploring villages on the outskirts of the city. This particular spot was **Worli Village** — a fishing village, ancient and alive with energy.

“Curiosity is what guides us out there onto the front lines of life.”

I arrived around noon as they were setting up for **Holi**, and by complete chance, I was invited into someone’s home. We had tea, coffee, he showed me around, and gave me a sense of when the celebration would begin. I went in with no expectations — just openness. That’s how this photograph came to be.

- **Foreground:** a woman praying, eyes closed in deep focus
- **Middle ground:** a boy placing a gift on a sculpture
- **Background:** people dancing and chanting with their hands in the air

The gestures — the hands, the movement — they tie the story together. The woman’s prayer hands were so powerful that I placed her dead center in the composition.

“Really what this photograph came down to is curiosity — and then understanding where I must position my body to make a photograph of this scene.”

By dropping to a low angle, I was able to isolate subjects from the chaos of Holi and capture something pure and emotional.

2. Dhobi Ghat Laundry Worker

Dhobi Ghat is an open-air laundry market. That day, I ran into a random photographer looking for beams of light piercing through the walls. I had no idea about them until he pointed it out, and we ended up exploring together.

“We stumbled across this worker... and man, it was hot at the scene.”

- **Light beams** pierce through tarps, diagonally cutting the composition
- The **worker** gestures toward the fire, throwing paper or wood in
- **Background:** bicycles, barrels, tables — gritty, textured, dark

There’s a **simple gesture**, illuminated by both the **flames** and the **light beams**, guiding your eye. I photographed slightly from above, emphasizing that moment as the worker kneeled in the heat.

“A quiet, still moment amongst the chaos.”

3. Sledding in Fairmount Park

Going from hot to cold — here in *Philadelphia*, behind the Philadelphia Museum of Art, people often go sledding. This hill is one of my favorite places, and on snowy days, I knew exactly where to go.

“How can I isolate those moments from the background?”

- **Background:** the gazebo topped with *Hermes*, the messenger god

- **Foreground:** a boy bundled up, scarf on, ready to sled
- **Middle ground:** kids sledding, families playing

By **anchoring the gazebo** in the upper-left, and placing the boy in the bottom-right, I created a **diagonal tension** across the frame. The contrast of dark clothing against white snow helped separate the figures clearly.

“You can uplift a mundane moment to something more interesting.”

4. Dog Beach in Tel Aviv

A scene of everyday life, but layered. *Tel Aviv’s Dog Beach* was my favorite place to shoot when I studied abroad in Jerusalem. Dogs, people, chaos — a recipe for great frames.

- **Foreground:** two dogs entering the frame at the perfect moment
- **Middle ground:** people sunbathing, playing, showering
- **Background:** a loving couple in the far corner, embracing with a towel

The composition started with the **background and leading lines**. I waited for dogs to run through the frame. That filled it out, creating a balance of **movement**, **gesture**, and **emotion**.

“A mundane, simple, everyday beach scene — but filled with visual and emotional complexity.”

5. Prayer in Jericho

Similar to Mumbai, this image was born out of **openness and curiosity**. I was in Jericho, traveling and photographing for weeks, and found myself invited to a wedding.

During the celebration, I stepped inside to get water — and found a **quiet, tender moment**.

- A **man praying**, kneeling in *salah*
- A **boy sleeping**, curled up nearby
- **Background**: repeating window patterns, textured mats on the floor

I shot it from many angles. Straight-on didn't work. So I shifted to the side and used the **windows as a repeating pattern** to give structure and depth. That allowed me to connect these two moments — the boy and the man — into a unified frame.

“You find these moments when you least expect them.”

Final Thoughts

If you enjoyed today's breakdown, visit dantesisofo.com — click on the *Start Here* page for a breakdown on how I mastered street photography, including:

- My favorite **photo books**
- A free **Contact Sheets PDF**
- Behind-the-scenes **POV video series** from Mumbai
- A playlist of these **video lectures**

Thank you for watching, and I'll see you in the next video.

Peace.