# Street Photography Breakdown Part 17

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

Welcome to *Street Photography Breakdown, Part 17*, where we look at **five different photographs**, breaking down their compositions and how they were made. The hope is that you come away with an understanding of *how I approach the streets*—through both philosophy and technique—and then apply this to your journey.

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- ## **Drugs in Dharavi**

This was an intense photograph made in *Dharavi, Mumbai.* Totally spontaneous.

> **"A photographer must possess courage and curiosity, and these virtues I believe we should carry out there onto the front lines of life."**

As I walked the slums, people welcomed me into their homes. Photos were practically gifted to me.

This one happened when a man came up, showed me his stash, and said:

> **"Look, look! Indian drugs. Come here. Take photo."**

So I did. I got as close as I physically could, locking in on the moment he snorted. The photo is intense because I filled the frame with his gesture, his eyes—looking *right back at you*.

> **"When you float through life on a feather bed... detach from the outcome with a positive, curious, childlike attitude—you'll just float through the chaos and the unknown and nothing will hurt you."**

The background? Another man coughing, reacting to the drug. Total chaos. I had maybe **two seconds** to respond. But that's the magic—*real life, unfiltered.*

Want to see the behind-the-scenes? Head to my <u>YouTube playlist</u>.

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- ## **The Baby in Jericho**

I was in Jericho. A man invited me in for coffee.

Eventually, I found myself inside his house. I spotted the baby on the couch—waiting for the mother.

So I backed up and framed the scene.

- **The baby on the couch**
- **Signs above the doorway**: I believe they said *Allah* and *Muhammad*
- **Teddy bears and other symbols**

These *little elements* told the story. I used:

- **Leading lines**
- **Foreground and background relationship**
- **Depth from the couch**

  ***"The tender moment of the child laying on the couch is beautiful—but it's the details around that child that elevate this mundane moment."***

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- ## **Tel Aviv Beach**

One of the *first* photographs I made in Israel, 2017.

The beach is a great place to work with **layers**. Clean backdrop, plenty of opportunity for separation across foreground, midground, background.

In this scene:

- Person lying on a chair with their head covered
- A gesture toward their face—**focal point**
- Yellow umbrella in the foreground for color and depth
- Blue sky with a sign perfectly jutting out
- Horizon line of rocks

And finally—someone walking along the coastline.

> *"I'm just playing this visual game of putting together a composition like a puzzle."*

I sensed the moment, waited, and composed with intention. All I had to do was *angle my body and wait.*

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- ## The Western Wall, Jerusalem

This was actually the **first photograph** I made in Israel—before the beach.

At the Western Wall, everyone was still, in prayer.

But my eye caught **movement**—people going in and out of the bathroom on the left. *That* was the energy I was after.

So I positioned myself at the **choke point**—right where the action happens.

> *"By sensing the possibility of movement and people aligning, I made this picture through intuition—but also with full awareness of my background."*

The result?

- 7 people aligned in the frame
- Foreground: Orthodox Jew in black hat moving right
- Clean separation between subjects
- Perfect lines from the floor and wall

*"Put order to the chaos by recognizing these very simple, fundamental things that will help you improve your street photography."*

### Three Takeaways:
1. **Find a choke point** — where movement happens
2. **Set your stage** — background matters
3. **Be patient** — let the moment unfold

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- ## Summer in Baltimore

An early photo from 2016. **Golden hour.**

Two boys shirtless, playing in the street. Two girls in the background—one pushing a baby stroller, pretending to be a mother.

- Foreground: **Two boys**, dynamic and engaged
- Background: **Two girls**, playful and real
- Setting: Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood

It's all about:

- **Simple backdrop** — clean walls, doors, windows
- **Eye direction** — the boy's gaze leads the viewer
- **Gesture and spacing** — all elements cleanly separated

*"A great photograph is not only compelling in terms of the moment—but also easy to read."*

These are the kinds of moments you find when you're *actually out there walking*.
Especially in neighborhoods where life spills out onto the street. And this is the
image I came home with that day in *September 2016*.

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## Final Thoughts

If you enjoyed this video breakdown, head to dantesisafo.com for more.

Also, check out my **YouTube** playlist @StreetPhotography for more videos, lectures,
and behind-the-scenes content.

> ***"I hope something I said inspired you or taught you something that you can
> apply to your photography."***

See you in the next one.

**Peace.**