

Street Photography Breakdown, Part 11

What's poppin' people? It's Dante. Welcome to *Street Photography Breakdown, Part 11* — where we dive into **five photographs**, break down five different compositions, and give you some behind-the-scenes insight on how these images were created.

My goal? To help you walk away with ideas you can apply on your own street photography journey.

Example 1: Basketball in Mumbai

A lot of the time, I **follow my intuition** when I enter a new place. I wander alleys and streets that are otherwise unnoticed or uncharted.

"The simple pleasure of exploration is to go somewhere outwardly into the world, into the unknown, and sort of just go with the flow."

This was just some random beach town. I hopped in a taxi and said, "The sun's setting — take me to the closest beach." I landed at a street scene where a boy was playing basketball.

What made the shot:

- Beautiful golden hour light
- Vibrant backdrop with textures and color
- **Gesture pattern** of the boy tossing the ball repeatedly

I recognized a moment and **worked the scene**. Dropped to a lower angle. Let the scene unfold.

- Boy in foreground
- Man in green shirt in background

- A dog swooping around
- Religious statue on a ledge
- A basket on the far right

"You can't really put it all together in the moment. But to create order out of chaos, simplify it down to a few key elements."

This shot was about **positioning, color, timing, and trusting my gut.**

Example 2: Schuylkill River Docks, Philadelphia

I love riding my bike along the river trail. Once again, I'm out during that **golden/blue hour** transition — cool, nuanced light.

This was a **joyful, uplifting summer day.**

There were people hanging out on blankets, and I spotted a child sitting on the right on their phone. That became my *anchor point*.

What I built from:

- Anchor subject (the child)
- Foreground dock and background dock for structure
- Movement of people walking on the promenade
- Reflection of the fisherman
- A girl entering the foreground

"I'm looking at the world in front of me as a visual puzzle to solve."

The composition came together by working **back to front** and **front to back**, like solving a layered puzzle of time and space.

Example 3: Snake Tattoo at the Art Museum

Another one from the Schuylkill River Trail. I saw a guy holding up a **snake**, doing tricks. I asked to make a photo.

He placed the snake on the grass, went to pick it up — and I dropped low.

I photographed the **snake on the ground**, and later noticed something wild:

"The tattoo on his leg was the exact same shape as the real snake."

That wasn't planned. I didn't even notice it in the moment.

But that's the magic of instinct:

- Man's **gesture** lifting the snake
- **Tattoo mirroring the real snake**
- Art museum in the background

"Not every good photo is seen with the naked eye. Some are felt. Some are gifts."

Example 4: Zambian Funeral

As a **Peace Corps volunteer** in Zambia, I attended many funerals. It's actually **culturally encouraged** to join when you pass one.

I was integrated into the community, spoke the Bemba language, and was allowed to photograph these events respectfully.

One day, I was at a funeral:

- I noticed the **dust rising**

- The men **digging the grave**
- And this one man who **collapsed in grief**

I tracked him with my feet and my eyes. I dropped low, pressed the shutter.

"I don't believe photography has anything to do with photography. It has everything to do with how you engage with humanity out there on the front lines of life."

Visual elements that came together:

- Repeated **arm gestures** of the shovels
- Rising smoke
- A stick mimicking the shovel's shape
- **Tension** between order and chaos

As a street photographer, I look for the *geometry within emotion*, the **formal beauty** inside the human moment.

 **Example 5: Jesus in Mexico City**

I saw the mountains in the distance and said: **I want to go there.**

Got in a taxi. Went to a place called *Idios Verdes*. Took a gondola to the top.

And what did I find?

- A **giant sculpture of Jesus**
- A gritty **construction site**
- A **man shouting "Mexico! Mexico!"** with arms outstretched

"As I reached the peak, I was there at the brink of danger, in the unknown, at the top of this city."

This shot was **intentional**.

- I **plugged Jesus into the background**
- Waited for a human to enter the foreground
- The man entered, arms stretched
- **Boom – visual connection established**

Also in the frame:

- A dog
- A bag of soil
- Storm clouds rolling in

"This is what happens when you're sharp, observant, and present – when you work the scene and trust your intuition."

Final Thoughts: Go Where the Light Takes You

"The adventure of your life is just right outside your door."

Don't just go to the hotspots. Go to the places that **draw you in**.

- Wander the alleys
- Follow the light
- Climb the mountain

That's where the *real* photography happens. That's where *you* happen.

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-  Guide: *How I Mastered Street Photography*
-  Full Ricoh GR guide
-  How to Conquer Fear in Street Photography

Also hit the **YouTube channel** — I've got *behind-the-scenes videos* from my trip to Mumbai, India and much more coming soon.

Thanks for watching.
See you in the next one.

Peace.
