

## Why Street Photography Isn't About Being a "Visual Storyteller"

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

This morning I'm thinking about this funny notion of being a *visual storyteller* as a photographer — and why I think it's important to avoid this mindset in street photography.

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### Street Photography ≠ Storytelling

Street photography, to me, is very separate from this idea of *storytelling* or *photojournalism*. I think a lot of photographers take themselves too seriously. It's kind of a funny thing — the whole “put on your photography hat, hang the camera around your neck, wipe down the lens, and head out to tell some visual stories” routine.

You hear things like:

*“I hope to document the youth.”*

*“I want to tell the story of what it's like to live in this neighborhood.”*

That's fine — but often, those kinds of projects end up feeling contrived, constrained, and ultimately mediocre. The photos start to lose their soul. They become lackluster because the photographer is trapped inside a *narrative framework* instead of chasing truth through instinct.

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## The Power of the Single Image

I'm interested in making **strong photographs** — not in telling stories. Street photography, to me, isn't about *what is*, but about *what could be*.

Rather than depicting reality for what it is, we depict reality for what it *could* or *should* be through our own interpretation. That's what separates street photography from photojournalism.

When you box yourself into the need to “tell the truth,” you strip away imagination — and that limits your creative freedom. It limits your ability to create something that transcends mere documentation.

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## Stop Taking Yourself So Seriously

Honestly, I think this obsession with being a “visual storyteller” — thinking your photography is going to *change the world* — is a foolish way forward. Yes, our photos have meaning. Yes, we document the world around us. And sure, our work might influence how people see a particular place in the future.

But that doesn't mean we should get caught up in **grandiosity**. Photography should be **selfish** — something you do because you love it. It should be **fun**, not a burden. Not a chore. Not something to inflate your ego with.

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## A Form of Philosophical Commentary

You could say that street photography is a kind of **social commentary** or **philosophical reflection** on the world. Through our cameras, we're observing, interpreting, and expressing our view of reality — not chasing objectivity.

Street photography is subjective by nature. It's personal.  
And that's what makes it powerful.

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At the end of the day, forget about being a “visual storyteller.”  
Just go out, walk, and make photographs that move you —  
not because they explain the world,  
but because they express how *you* see it.