

Slow Shutter Speed Street Photography: Creating a New World at 1/3 of a Second

The Accident That Changed Everything

Foreign. What's poppin, people? It's Dante. Before I started my day in Tokyo, sitting in my hotel room with the iPad in front of me, I wanted to break down a small accident that led to a full creative breakthrough. It started outside of Shibuya Station. I was shooting like I normally do — Ricoh GR III, AV mode, f/8, practicing layering, observing the rhythm of people entering and exiting the station.

I made a frame at **1/15 of a second**. Completely unintentional. A “mistake.” But the silhouettes looked *different*. A little blurred. A little ghostly. Something inside me paused. Something new had revealed itself.

That tiny spark led me down a completely new path.

Realization Through the LCD Screen

What really grabbed my attention was how the blur of the silhouettes appeared on my LCD. It wasn't something I planned. It wasn't something I was trying to force. It *came to me* because I was shooting freely, making hundreds of frames, waiting for that girl in the background to lift her head from her phone.

And then I saw it — motion blur in a way I hadn't intentionally explored.

Tokyo's crowds move quickly. People are either locked into their phones or sprinting toward the next train. But the camera saw something I didn't. The subtle blur of bodies. The stillness of a girl glued to her screen. The contrast between motion and rest.

And that's when it clicked.

Shifting Into Manual Mode

After seeing the effect at 1/15, I decided to intentionally push the shutter lower. I switched into **manual mode** — something I almost never do.

1/4 of a second.

f/16.

+1 exposure compensation.

Auto ISO.

Snap focus at 3.5 meters.

I walked to Shinjuku Station the next night with a clear purpose:
Execute the shot.

The stabilizers in the Ricoh GR III actually helped me hold the camera steady enough to freeze the background while allowing the motion of passing strangers to streak across the frame.

I planted my feet.
Held the camera at my waist.
Waited for the overlap of figures.
And let the city move.

Behind the Scenes in Shinjuku

The scene itself was nothing extraordinary — just people hanging out against a white wall near the station, lights glowing from the bars and clubs, promoters standing around waiting for customers. But something about the rhythm of the

moment felt right.

Filming behind-the-scenes, I talked through the settings:

- Manual mode
- 1/4 shutter, later 1/3
- f/16 for maximum depth
- Auto ISO
- +1 EV
- Snap focus for clean stationary subjects
- Let the moving bodies blur naturally

The goal wasn't complexity.

The goal was **intentional experimentation**.

And suddenly... something remarkable happened.

The Shot That Emerged

What appeared on the LCD felt like another world.

In the center of the frame, the woman drifting through the scene looked like a **ghost**, a **hologram**, a **figure emerging through a veil**. She looked like she was spawning into existence — something between this world and another.

The still subjects against the wall were crisp.

The blurred bodies crossing the frame created streaks.

The neon skyline added atmosphere.

The entire scene moved toward abstraction.

It looked like Tokyo nightlife distilled into one ethereal moment.

And it came from lowering the shutter to **1/3 of a second**.

Breaking Through Creatively

This entire breakthrough came from one thing:

A mistake.

A tiny observation in AV mode.

A curiosity to push further.

And what I realized is simple:

If you never experiment, you never evolve.

Most photographs we make are a result of:

- where we stand
- how we time the shutter
- what settings we choose
- how reality decides to behave around us

But when you start *tinkering* with settings you normally ignore, a completely different world can manifest.

With black and white, I'm already abstracting reality.

With slow shutter, I'm discovering something beyond the veil.

It feels like creating a new world from a mundane moment — turning a train station crowd into something transcendental.

Creating a New World From Nothing

The beauty of this technique is that it elevates the ordinary.

People rushing to catch trains.

A girl staring at her phone.

A white wall.

A cluster of club promoters.

Nothing special.

And yet, at 1/3 of a second, something extraordinary emerges.

Something unpredictable.

Something outside my control.

The camera becomes a vessel.

Reality transforms.

A new world materializes.

My goal is to create something from nothing — to take the ordinary and elevate it to a mythic, almost spiritual height. To make a snapshot that feels like a dream.

And I feel like this was the beginning of a real shift in my photography.

Final Thoughts

So that's the story.

A mistake.

A moment.

A breakthrough.

Shooting in Tokyo at night pushed me out of my comfort zone. I'm normally a daytime photographer — I like waking up early, editing early, going to sleep early. But this trip is reminding me to stay open, stay curious, and push myself into new territory.

Slow shutter speed street photography is now part of my toolkit.
Not as a gimmick —
but as a new way of seeing.

If you want to see the behind-the-scenes video, camera settings, and full
breakdown, check out the blog on:

<http://dantesisofo.com>

Peace.