

## Street Photography in the Snow: Finding Order in Chaos

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

Today I want to walk you through some street photography from a Philly snow day yesterday — January 25, 2026. I grabbed the Ricoh GR III, shot high-contrast black and white **small JPEGs**, everything cranked directly into the file, and just hit the streets.

### Walking the River Trail

The first place I wanted to go was the River Trail along the Schuylkill. It leads right up to the Philadelphia Art Museum, where people sled down those crazy rocky steps from the *Rocky* movie.

I love this location. I come here all the time — sometimes weekly, sometimes every day. Just looking out toward the horizon reminds me how open the world is, how much there is to see, explore, and photograph.

Like the river constantly flowing, you can't make the same photograph twice. Light changes. Seasons change. Snow falls. Even in a familiar place, you can still make something new — *still make something from nothing*.

There's something powerful about this trail too. It's one streamlined path. No left. No right. Just forward. That limitation actually creates infinite possibility for me.

### Photographing Light, Shape, and Instinct

Lately my approach has shifted toward abstraction — photographing **light itself** as the subject. The ice forming on the river, the snow creating shapes — I'm drawn to geometry, form, and contrast.

What triggers me to photograph usually comes from the gut. A shape. A flash of light. I respond quickly. Program mode. Snap focus set to infinity. Loose. Fast. Instinctive.

I'm not trying to control things too much.

### **The First Frame at the Art Museum**

When I arrived at the bottom of the steps, the first person I saw was this man dancing in the snow with his music. Just pure energy. I had to make a photograph.

I caught him jumping into the snow, arm flailing — a perfect way to start the day.

People were everywhere. Hundreds of them. Sledding, falling, yelling, laughing. Total chaos.

### **Avoiding the Obvious Moment**

Here's the thing: the sledding itself is the obvious moment. And I'm not really interested in that.

What I'm interested in is what happens *after* — the shuffle. People picking up their sleds. Resetting. Moving through each other. That in-between energy.

I started looking at how people formed patterns. How shapes related across the foreground, middle ground, and background. That's where it got interesting.

*Street photography becomes a puzzle when everything is chaotic.*

### **Creating Order in Chaos**

One frame that really stuck with me was this moment of a boy picking himself up. It wasn't about his face — it was about the **gesture**, the shape his body made, the rhythm of feet moving in stride.

I made sure to layer the frame:

- People filling the foreground
- Sledders drifting through the background
- The art museum anchoring the top of the frame
- The snowy stairs acting as a clean, white backdrop

That white space simplified everything and made the silhouettes pop.

### **Exposure as a Tool**

Practically speaking, I was shooting with exposure compensation around **+1.7**, highlight-weighted metering, AV mode, snap focus at two meters.

I wanted the background blown out so I could reveal faces and gestures in the foreground. Exposure became a way to isolate emotion inside chaos.

One frame came together through a simple raised hand — a man throwing his arm up after coming down the hill. Small gesture. Big payoff.

### **Peripheral Vision and In-Between Moments**

I spent most of my time on the outskirts, watching the periphery. A girl getting snow dumped out of her boot by her mother. A simple gesture that stood out against a bright, noisy background.

These moments weren't loud. They were quiet, human, and full of shape.

## **Moving to the Top of the Hill**

After that, I went up top and looked out toward the skyline. I saw a dog playing with its owner and made a quick, tilted frame — candid, loose, and immediate.

Two people chugging beers on a staircase — I literally slid down the stairs to get the shot. No other way to make the frame.

A couple throwing snowballs. One falls. The man picks her up. She smiles. I noticed someone standing on a ledge and made a quick relationship between foreground and background.

Again — always looking for relationships.

## **The Process Matters**

I even made a photo of a sled — a trash can lid. People were sledding on trash bags, cardboard boxes, laundry bins — anything they could find. It's such a Philly thing.

The two frames I liked the most from the day were both about the shuffle at the bottom of the hill. That chaotic toss-up of people moving, gathering, resetting.

I've been building a little collection of snow photos like this over the years — 2024, 2025, and now 2026.

## **Final Thoughts**

Photographing in the snow is fun — but also challenging. There's so much obvious action. The real challenge is *not* photographing the obvious thing.

For me, it's about:

- Shapes and forms
- Faces and gestures

- The moments in between

It's a constant game of assembling a visual puzzle.

I was exhausted after this day. Slept 10–12 hours. Fully crashed. Feeling good now.

Just wanted to turn the camera on and share how my mind works in these environments.

Maybe I'll go back out today.

I'll see you in the next one.

Peace.