

Street Photography Tips - Photoshooting on The Street Made Easy



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Street photography is becoming increasingly popular and is earning its label as a genre all its own. It is a good way for amateur photographers to practice their craft, as well as a way for any photographer to get to know their neighborhood. It is one of the more fun and exciting types of photography that can generate wonderful images that stimulate even more creativity. The following tips are helpful to perfecting the art of street photography.

Practice Makes Perfect – Always

The only way to become better at the art of photography is to take the camera out and about, photographing tons of objects in many different ways. Digital photography is perfect for practicing because if any of the pictures are not up to par, they can simply be deleted. Of course, the amateur could study the photographs that are substandard so he or she can critically examine them, seeing where the photograph could be improved. Malcolm Gladwell, best-selling author of the book *Outliers* said, "...there's a 10,000 hour rule to becoming an expert at anything. Time's a wasting!" So, as he suggested, the time is now, and 10,000 hours is a lot of practice, so get started as soon as possible!

Shoot From the Hip – What Does It Mean

"Shooting from the hip," is a recommendation of a professional photographer to the photography student who is just starting to develop his own signature work. His recommendation came after he was privy to the definition given by the self-proclaimed street photography experts. The organizers of the London Street Photography Festival, when asked to describe street photography, described it as "un-posed, un-staged photography, which captures, explores or questions contemporary society and the relationship between individuals and their surroundings." The photographer disagreed with this description because, while it sounds good and looks good on paper, it would cause a great deal of frustration to the novice photographer, attempting to get his or her street photographs to fit into that narrow definition.

Speaking of definitions, however, perhaps a little clarity is necessary when telling people to “shoot from the hip.” That does not mean a novice photographer should roam far and away with a camera strapped to his or her hip in the image of a gunslinger from the Wild West in a bygone era. Instead, when a situation of interest catches their attention, putting the camera up to his or her eye could take too much precious time and draw undesired attention, just take a few shots with the camera hanging around the neck or shoulder and see what comes of those shots. In crowded places, a good technique to use is to aim the camera in the subject’s general direction, raise it in the air with the chosen arm, and click off pictures quickly. It could result in some surprisingly astute observations.

It is conceded that “shooting from the hip” will not always result in photographs that are perfectly composed, but the funky angles that could result from this tact could give a photographer a better feel for their work. Occasionally, the camera will inadvertently capture things that the eye would have missed entirely. After that picture is printed, however, the photographer in question can still get all of the credit for his or her incredibly astute observations.

Why Is Discretion Important

When shooting from the hip, a photographer must always be discreet. This is because in street photography, the subjects cannot appear as though they know they are being photographed. The best way to do this is to blend in with the surroundings by dressing like others in the area will be dressed as well. Not to state the obvious, but it must be said anyway. Flash is one big NO! Almost as big of a no is loitering for hours around the same area with a camera hung around the neck while waiting for the light to become optimal. These things will make the people intended as objects become self-conscious. A chilled out, stealthy photographer will capture much better images in a situation like the one described above. If need be, pretend to be a spy on a secret mission, and use this as a means to shoot the photographs.

Mind Your Manners

One of the lesser known of the critical skills for becoming an ace photographer is the ability to be polite. A warm smile and friendly gesture go a long way to putting a person at ease who has just caught a perfect stranger taking pictures of them. Kind gestures can relieve any tension that may arise because of the subject being uncomfortable with being photographed, particularly without being notified about it beforehand. If kindness is a skill that one possesses, it might be useful if the subject allows the shooting to continue, thus allowing pictures closer to the action.

Turn on the charm before turning the camera on an unwitting subject.

NO MEANS NO (IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT LANGUAGES)

Some people do not like having their picture taken, and these people will not care how polite and well meaning the photographer is. If one is brave enough, shoot beforehand, and then offer an apology afterward. Once a person has declined any offers, do not press them, because it could limit the opportunities to shoot the area in the future. Taking pictures of children who are unknown does nothing to further a cordial relationship with their parents or guardians. If someone does not want his or her picture taken, then just don't do it. Needless to say, this also goes for them not wanting their children's pictures taken either.

If subjects of choice are people, then it is good for the photographer to know his or her rights. Unless a photograph is going to be published, then it is usually unnecessary to get their signature on a model release form. Photojournalism, however, even if it includes people in the shot, does not need releases at all. That being said, it's better to be safe than sorry, and it's not that hard to carry model releases around in the camera bag.

The best advice about street photography: have fun, experiment and learn from your mistakes. Decide, via the viewfinder, what parts of modern life are worth capturing and recording. What is important to one person is bound to be of importance to someone else; someday, anyway