

# Street Photography

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# Agenda

- **What is street photography?**
- **How does it differ from photo-journalism?**
- **Equipment**
- **Technique**
- **Sample street photos**
- **Summary**

# What Is Street Photography?

**Street photography** is photography that features the human condition within public space. (Wikipedia)

(Candid) photos of people going about their business (Clive)

## Photo-Journalism



Nick Ut

IMHO - Despite some similarities street photography and photo-journalism are different, PJ is “blood sweat & tears” (Clive)



Henri  
Cartier  
Bresson

# Equipment (1)

Why is this a street photo legend?

- A Leica M3
- With a fast 50mm lens
- And a 36 exposure B&W film



Because it was better than:

- A Speed Graphic
- With Sheet film

Street photos can be shot with almost any type of camera!



# Equipment (2)

## Lenses – What Focal Length?

1. Moderate wide angle to short telephoto
  - Full frame – 28mm to 85mm
  - APS-C – 18mm to 50mm
2. Moderate wide angles make the viewer “part of the scene”
3. Long telephotos = paparazzi

Not Recommended



# Equipment & Techniques

## Why was the Leica special?

1. Manual focus
2. Fixed focal length
3. Manual exposure
4. Inconspicuous
5. Rangefinder
6. “Cool factor”

## Why is this still relevant (but not critical)?

1. No “hunting” / wrong focus point
2. Speed, no need to zoom (#1)
3. Subject unaffected by background
4. Candid shots
5. See outside the frame (or crop)
6. Irrelevant

## Some Techniques

1. Pre-focus & use DoF, Pre-set exposure, Visualize “frame”
2. Roam and shoot – quick grab shots, often head-on
3. The ambush – pre-compose, shoot when subject enters “frame”
4. Hover – combination of above, maximize target rich environment

# Images

A selection of images

- All photos shot “in the street”
- Some are better street photos than others
- All photos taken by Clive

My “Street Rating” criteria

- Candid – Is the subject “natural” or “posing”
- Interesting – Doing something or interesting appearance
- Distance – is the viewer “part of the scene” or an observer
- Technical – Focus, exposure, composition

My “Street Rating” scale

- Nailed it! – ★
- OK – ✓
- Meh! – ✗

# The Market, Hong Gai

Comment –  
subject is posing  
for the shot,  
strong colour  
cast, too far from  
subject



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ✗
- Interest ★
- Distance ✓
- Technical ✗

# Friendly folk, Sanya



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ✗
- Interest ★
- Distance ✓
- Technical ✓

Comment – subjects are reacting to the photographer, long lens

# New Year Parade, Vancouver



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ✗
- Interest ★
- Distance ✓
- Technical ★

Comment – subject is performing for the crowd, shot with long lens

# Poopie, Granville Island



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ★
- Distance ✓
- Technical ★

Comment – Viewer is disconnected from the subjects, shot from too far away

# Dude!, Vancouver



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ✓
- Distance ✓
- Technical ★

Comment – Good street portrait, would be better if he was interacting with someone

# Person sitting, New York



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ✓
- Distance ✓
- Technical ★

Comment – Technically good, but nothing is going on, too far away from subject

# Man walking, Vancouver



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ★
- Distance ✓
- Technical ★

Comment – Technically good, too far away from subject

# Street Musician, Cape Town



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ★
- Distance ★
- Technical ✓

Comment – subject is performing but focussed on playing, background too bright

# New Year Preparation, Vancouver



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ★
- Distance ★
- Technical ✓

Comment – subjects are close enough and are not influenced by the photographer

# Preparing for New Year, Vancouver



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ★
- Distance ✓
- Technical ★

Comment – Good shot, would have been better if photographer was closer

# 3 Musicians, Amsterdam



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ★
- Distance ✓
- Technical ★

Comment – Musician interacting with crowd but a closer shot would be better

# Street Vendor, New York



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ★
- Distance ✓
- Technical ★

Comment – Would be better if more faces visible and a closer shot would be better

# Zombie, Vancouver



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ✓
- Interest ★
- Distance ★
- Technical ★

Comment – subject is part of performance but not “playing to the crowd”

# Food Cart, London



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ★
- Distance ★
- Technical ✓

Comment – Shot straight into the sun, technically challenging, some may not like it

# Denizens of Montreal



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ★
- Distance ★
- Technical ★

Comment – subject has noticed photographer but not reacted yet

# More zombies, Vancouver



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ★
- Distance ★
- Technical ★

Comment – subject is performing for the crowd, not “going about his business”

# Busker, Toronto



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ★
- Distance ★
- Technical ★

Comment – Quirky performer but not influenced by the photographer

# Artist, Place du Tertre



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ★
- Distance ★
- Technical ★

Comment – Subject is “going about his business” in a unique location

# Market Stall, Thailand



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ★
- Distance ★
- Technical ★

Comment – subject is “going about her business”

# Food Stall, Richmond



## “Street Rating”

- Candid ★
- Interest ★
- Distance ★
- Technical ★

Comment – Probably my best street shot, action, interesting setting, technically good

# Summary

## Practice “street” techniques

1. Smile if your subject spots you, don't be “shifty”
2. Be 100% comfortable with your gear – practice using it
3. Use a prime lens or “lock” zoom
4. Visualize “frame” for “ambush shots”
5. Pre-focus & use DoF – ensure subject in focus
6. Manually pre-set exposure – shoot test shot or use meter
7. Pre visualize the shot – find the right subject
8. Go shoot!

You won't need these all the time but if you do they will help you get the shot