



MASTERS



By Eric Kim, Cindy Nguyen, Annette Kim

Mobile Edition, 2018

HAPTIC

"I also photograph because I am curious. I am curious about what the person on the other side of the street is thinking, how he or she lives, and how he or she feels. I am always looking for someone to share a moment with."

-JACOB AUE SOBOL

"For me, capturing what I feel with my body is more important than the technicalities of photography. If the image is shaking, it's OK, if it's out of focus, it's OK. Clarity isn't what photography is about."

-DAIDO MORIYAMA

"Shooting people is more beautiful,
because it is more difficult."

-CONSTANTINE MANOS

"I'm always trying to channel those personal emotions into my work. That is very different from a lot of documentary photographers who want to depict the city more objectively. For me it is very personal – it's about what is inside me. I don't think about what other people will make of it. I shoot for myself."

-TRENT PARKE

"Pick a theme and work it to exhaustion... the subject must be something you truly love or truly hate. [...]"

Photographers stop photographing a subject too soon before they have exhausted the possibilities."

-DOROTHEA LANGE

"A portrait is not a likeness. The moment an emotion or fact is transformed into a photograph it is no longer a fact but an opinion. There is no such thing as inaccuracy in a photograph. All photographs are accurate. None of them is truth."

-RICHARD AVEDON

"My wish for the future of photography is that it might continue to have some relevance to the human condition and might represent work that evokes knowledge and emotions. That photography has content rather than just form."

-ELLIOTT ERWITT

"I find that young people tend to stop too soon. They mimic something they've seen, but they don't stay long enough. If you're going to photograph anything, you have to spend a long time with it so your subconscious has a chance to bubble to the surface."

-BRUCE DAVIDSON

"I am an amateur and intend to remain one my whole life long. I attribute to photography the task of recording the real nature of things, their interior, their life. The photographer's art is a continuous discovery, which requires patience and time. A photograph draws its beauty from the truth with which it's marked."

-ANDRE KERTESZ

Table of Contents



Chapter 1

Inspiration

“Luck or perhaps serendipity plays a big role... But you never know what is going to happen. And what is most exciting is when the utterly unexpected happens, and you manage to be there at the right place at the right time - and push the shutter at the right moment. Most of the time it doesn't work out that way. Street photography is 99.9% about failure.”

– Alex Webb



9 **Get Closer**

10 **Shoot From Your
Gut, Shoot With
Your Heart**

12 **You Are Not Your
Photos**

Chapter 2

Rules and Breaking Them

“People say you’re a documentary photographer. I don’t even know what that means. People say you are a photojournalist. I’m rarely published in journals. Then you’re a fine art photographer. Then I say I’m not. I aspire to be a fine photographer.”

– Bruce Davidson



- 17 **Compose Intuitively**
- 23 **Interact With Your Subject**
- 25 **Creative Constraints**
- 27 **Feel Your Photographs**
- 30 **Embrace Failure**

Chapter 3

Style & Storytelling

“I’m always trying to channel those personal emotions into my work. That is very different from a lot of documentary photographers who want to depict the city more objectively. For me it is very personal – it’s about what is inside me. I don’t think about what other people will make of it. I shoot for myself.”

– Trent Parke



34 **Copy Your Master, Then Kill Your Master**

37 **Do Not Define Yourself**

43 **Shoot For Yourself**

45 **Forever Be An Amateur**

Inspiration

Inspiration means to 'breathe' in Ancient Greek. As a photographer, creative, and artist -- inspiration is what keeps you alive. To inspire yourself in photography is to study the work of the masters, and breathe the same creative air that they did. So breathe in good air. Breathe in clean mountain air, the air of great art. Prevent yourself from being inspired by mediocre art.

Ultimately, you can find inspiration everywhere. You can find inspiration in things outside of photography. Find inspiration in Bauhaus design, in Cubism, and Renaissance art. Find inspiration in dance, theater, film, and sculpture.

The more various fields of inspiration you combine and 'cross-pollinate', the more unique your photography nectar and honey will be.

We hope that you can find inspiration from the masters of photography, but not become a slave to them. Be inspired and then create. You must breathe your own creative air, and produce your own unique art -- true to your unique vision, true to yourself.

GET CLOSER

"If your photographs aren't good enough, you're not close enough."

– Robert Capa

One of the common mistakes that many beginning street photographers make is this: they do not get close enough.

We have many fears and provide a lot of excuses for not getting close enough in our street photography.

We are worried about annoying others, making people feel uncomfortable, or that strangers might call the police on us (or even worse, physically assault us).

Realize that most of this exists out of fear more than reality. By getting closer to a stranger, you will not die. Remind yourself why you shoot photography. You love it. Photography helps you understand the world and document the beauty of everyday life. Use this to prepare yourself for possible confrontation. Wear your passion for photography proudly.

In fact, I have learned that in photography and life, with physical proximity comes emotional proximity.

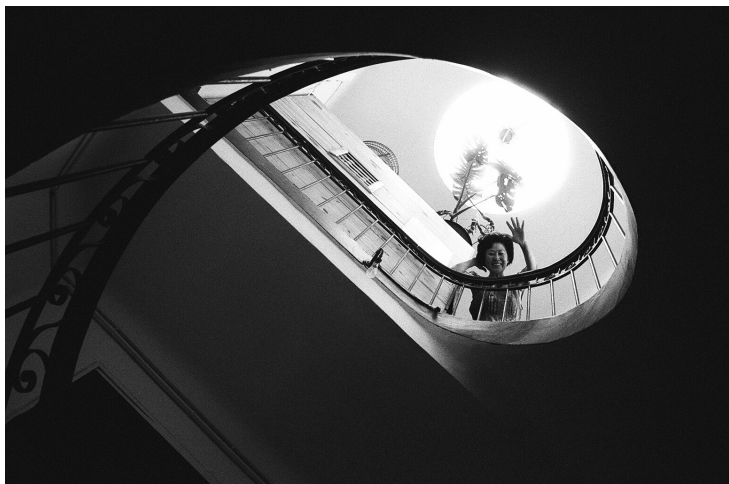
It is not enough to use a telephoto or zoom lens to get "close" to your subject. By using a zoom lens, you compress your image, and visually your photo feels less intimate. It

feels like you are more of a voyeur looking in; rather than being an active participant of the scene.

In street photography I generally recommend using a 35mm lens (full-frame equivalent). Many photographers such as Alex Webb, Constantine Manos, and Anders Petersen shoot with this focal length. The human eye sees the world approximately from a 40mm field-of-view, and I find that shooting with a 35mm lens gives you enough wiggle-room around the edges of the frame.

A 50mm is fine too (Henri Cartier-Bresson was famous for using it for nearly his entire life), but in today's crowded world, I find it to be a bit too tight. A 28mm is fantastic too (William Klein, Bruce Gilden, and Garry Winogrand have used this focal length), but realize that you have to be close enough with this lens to fill the frame.

As a rule-of-thumb, try to shoot with a 35mm at least two-arm-lengths away (or closer). 2 arm-lengths is 1.2 meters (around 4 feet). Therefore I always have my camera pre-focused to 1.2 meters, set at f/8, ISO 1600, and I simply go out to find moments to shoot.



SHOOT FROM YOUR GUT, SHOOT WITH YOUR HEART

“My photography is not ‘brain photography’. I put my brain under the pillow when I shoot. I shoot with my heart and with my stomach.”

– Anders Petersen

Anders Petersen is one of the most influential contemporary master photographers. He shoots with a simple point-and-shoot film camera (Contax T3) and shoots soulful black and white images which he refers to as “personal documentary.” He makes himself and the people he meets as his main subjects, and he shoots from the heart.



You can find emotion in graphical forms and shadows.

A photograph without emotion is dead. The problem that a lot of photographers make is that they try to become too analytical with their photography. They are too preoccupied with composition, framing, form, nice light, and they forget the most important thing of making a memorable image: creating an image that has heart, soul, and passion.



When you are out shooting, try not to be too analytical. Shoot from your intuition and your gut. If you find anything even remotely interesting, do not self-censor yourself. Just shoot with your intuition and follow your curiosity.

YOU ARE NOT YOUR PHOTOS

“Photographers mistake the emotion they feel while taking the photo as a judgment that the photograph is good.”

– Garry Winogrand



Do you love your photograph because it is a great photograph? Or do you love the photograph because you remember the back-story behind the photograph?

We are all guilty of this -- we mistake the emotion we feel while we took the photo as a judgment that the photo is good.

For example, we might have met an interesting man on the streets, and had a spirited conversation with him. He might have told us his life story -- how he started off

as a Wall Street banker, then became homeless, then worked his way out of poverty, got married and had kids, and then somehow fell victim to the streets again.

We let the memory and the back-story of a photograph influence our evaluation of it. However, a strong photograph should stand on its own.

What makes a great photograph? For me it is the following: composition, emotion, and personal significance.

COMPOSITION

Does the photograph have a strong composition? Is the image dynamic? Are there strong leading lines, diagonal lines, or curves? Is the light good? Is the background clean, and the subject is easily visible?

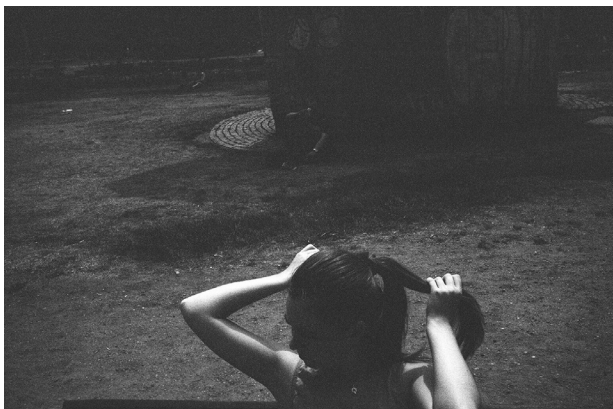
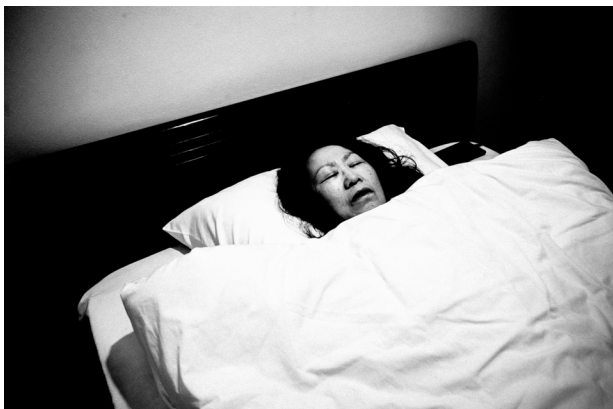
EMOTION

Does the photograph punch you in the gut with emotion? Is there a hand-gesture or body language which shows the inner-mind of the subject? Can the viewer empathize or feel the heart of the subject in the photograph?

A photograph without emotion is dead.

PERSONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Lastly, what personal significance does this photograph have for you? Does the photograph say anything about yourself? What makes this photograph unique from all the other photos out there? Why are you the only photographer who could have made the shot?



Detach Yourself from Your Photographs

"I try to separate myself completely from what I do. I try to step back to look at them as somebody who has nothing to do with them."

– Josef Koudelka

"The biggest danger for a photographer is if they start thinking they are important."

– Sebastião Salgado



Rules & Breaking Them

There are no 'rules' in photography, only guidelines. Consider the masters like guides. They offer some directions for you, but ultimately you choose your own path.

Do not just follow the beaten path. Rather, pave your own path.

When you start off in photography, consider copying the work of a master photographer who inspires you. This is what apprentices did in the Renaissance.

However, once you graduate from your apprenticeship, you must cut the umbilical cord and move on, and create your own unique art.

I recommend you to start off by listening to the 'rules' and guidelines of the master photographers. However, remix the rules and bend them for your own purposes. Take the pieces of inspiration that work for you, and discard what you disagree with.

Once you know the rules, then you can break them.



COMPOSE INTUITIVELY

“Composition must be one of our constant preoccupations, but at the moment of shooting it can stem only from our intuition, for we are out to capture the fugitive moment, and all the interrelationships involved are on the move.”

– Henri Cartier-Bresson

When you are shooting photography, you must shoot from your gut. You cannot over-analyze a scene. You must hustle, “work the scene”, and try to click when your intuition tells you.

We discover our compositions after we take the photos. The more we analyze our photos after we have made them, the more we can intuitively compose.

If you think too much about composition while you are shooting, you will become paralyzed. You will take fewer photos, and be less likely to capture the “decisive moment.”

Listen to your intuition. Theorize less about composition. Shoot more. Figure out what works after-the-fact.

To improve your composition, draw the compositional lines on your photos after you have taken them. If you have a photograph which you think works well, think what works about the composition. Think about how you can apply the method to your future photographs.



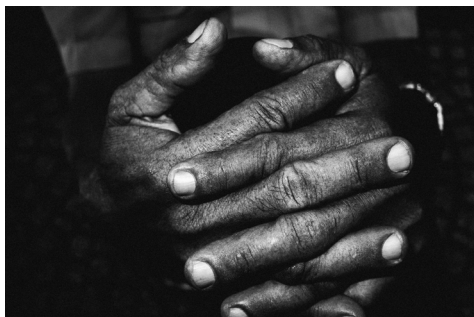
“It would be mistaken to suppose that any of the best photography is come at by intellection; it is like all art, essentially the result of an intuitive process, drawing on all that the artist is rather than on anything he thinks, far less theorizes about.”

– Helen Levitt

”Any geometrical analysis, any reducing of the picture to a schema, can be done only after the photograph has been taken, developed, and printed- and then it can be used only for a post-mortem examination of the picture.”

– Henri Cartier-Bresson

Analyze Contact Sheets



“It is more after when I am shooting when I am looking at my contact sheets, and then I try to analyze and put things together.”

– Anders Petersen

Shoot from your gut when you are out on the streets, but use your brain when you are at home and selecting your shots. Analyze your images after-the-fact and learn how to “kill your babies” (weak photos that you are emotionally attached to, but you know are not great photos).

Separate the shooting and editing sides of your photography. They use different parts of your brains, and if you try to do both of them at the same time, you will fail.

As a practical tip, turn off your LCD screen when shooting, and refrain from looking at your images immediately after you shot them (they call this “chimping”).

Why? It kills your shooting “flow.” Let your shots “marinate” by not looking at them until a week after you have made your images.



Contact Sheet: Saigon, 2017/

I worked the scene from different perspectives, engaged with the subject, and shot what interested me at the time.

Afterwards I focused on editing my best two images down. (Left)

Dynamic Composition Techniques

GESTURES

To make a more engaging compositions, find gestures. A gesture is someone turning their body to make eye contact with you, a gesture is someone pointing a certian direction, or a gesture is the way someone's body is curved and con-torted. Gestures through hands, body, and eyes will make the photo have more energy and soul.



DIAGONALS

Integrate diagonals. Either look for diagonals in the back-ground and wait for your subjects to enter the frame, or try to create diagonals through your subject's gestures. Ask your subject to lean their head, shift their body, or you can tilt your camera to make a diagonal as well.



FIGURE TO GROUND

Good photos have clean backgrounds, and strong contrast between the subject and background. This is called 'figure to ground' (figure = subject, ground = background). In other words, have a black subject against a white background, or a white subject against a black background.



INTERACT WITH YOUR SUBJECT

“Rather than catching people unaware, they show the face they want to show. Unposed, caught unaware, they might reveal ambiguous expressions, brows creased in vague internal contemplation, illegible, perhaps meaningless. Why not allow the subject the possibility of revealing his attitude toward life, his neighbor, even the photographer?”

– William Klein

There is a myth of the “detached” and “objective” photographer. Many photographers think they can be stealthy, and not “influence” the scene.

However what makes photographs interesting is how you can influence the scene. How your presence changes the people. How people react to you. And what side of themselves your subject decide to show.

William Klein was famous for being a director on the streets. Rather than shooting candid photos, he would put himself into his photos. He would provoke his subjects by saying certain words or phrases.

For example, in his most “Kid with gun” photograph, he told the kid, “Look tough!” This caused the kid to point his gun ferociously into Klein’s face. But doesn’t this mean the photograph is “inauthentic” because Klein provoked the boy? Absolutely not. The boy decided to show his inner self.

Rather than trying to be the “fly on the wall” photographer -- insert yourself into your images. Engage with your subjects. Learn about their lives and dreams.

Take photographs while your subject talks, or when they react to you. Before you start clicking, wait for eye contact, a hand-gesture, or a certain expression.

Try to catch the “unguarded moment” -- the second your subject forgets your presence. That is when your subject shows their true soul. Also when possible, try to get photos with and without eye contact. Eyes are the windows to the soul.



Hanoi, 2017 /

I met this 92 year old woman who told me that she still works everyday. While speaking with her I took photos of her face and hands. This photograph tells a more open story about this beautiful woman and her life.

CREATIVE CONSTRAINTS

“Too many choices will screw up your life. Work on one thing, then expand on your canvas.”

– David Alan Harvey



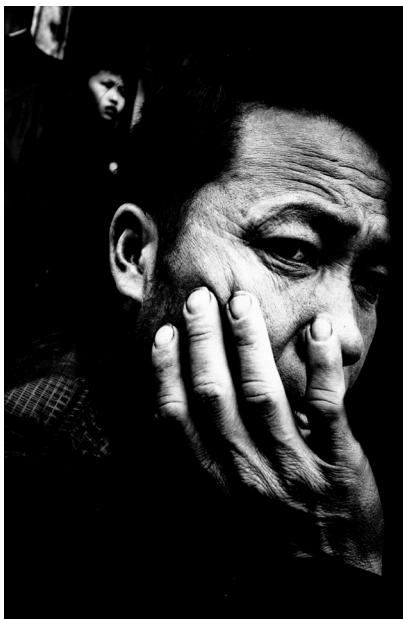
Creativity is not about having unlimited options. Creativity blossoms from constraints. The fewer options you have, the more resourceful you need to be. What are some limitations you can set on yourself to be more creative?

Limitations are Freedom

Try the following creative constraints for a week, a month, a year

- One camera one lens
- One square block
- One color
- One subject matter
- One time of day
- One emotion

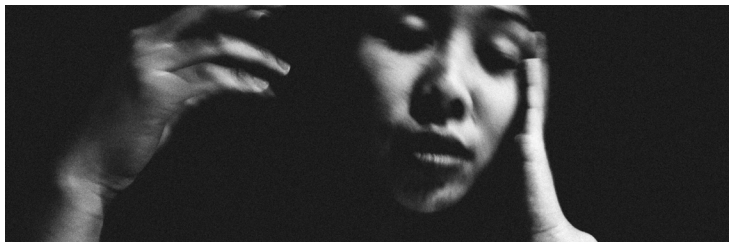
Sometimes you get lucky. For this photo, I shot 3 photos of the man, each shot stepping to the right (to shoot more head-on, to see his eyes). I kept shooting until he noticed me. The hand gesture is strong, and the 'cherry on top' is the kid in the top-left corner.



FEEL YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS

“For me, capturing what I feel with my body is more important than the technicalities of photography. If the image is shaking, it’s OK, if it’s out of focus, it’s OK. Clarity isn’t what photography is about.”

– Daido Moriyama



One of the common mistakes a lot of photographers make is that they are too analytical when they shoot street photography. They forget the most important part of photography: photographing what you feel with your heart.

Daido Moriyama is one of Japan’s most famous photographers who popularized the “stream-of-consciousness” style of photography. Not only that, but he popularized the radical “are, bure, boke” (grainy, blurry, out-of-focus) aesthetic, which rebelled against the photography at the time, which focused on making hyper-sharp images with high-end cameras.

"Stream-of-consciousness" photography embraces your thoughts, emotions, and ideas like a river or stream, flowing through your mind. You trust your intuition, instincts, and gut.

When you shoot photography, you just photograph what you find interesting, without any judgement, self-criticism, or frustration. You setup your camera with fully auto settings, and just point-and-click. It is the purest form of "snapshot" photography, where you do not think like an "artist" or "technician." You are just like a child, exploring the world, and photographing what you find interesting.

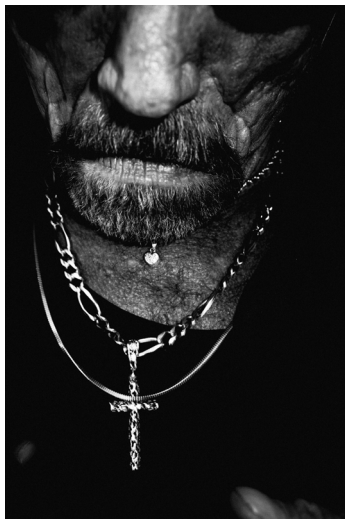
If you shoot with a "stream-of-consciousness," realize that the majority of your shots will not be very good. In fact, you will make a lot of random, uninteresting, and boring photographs. However if you channel your emotions into your photos, they will become more personally meaningful to you. Furthermore, this feeling will transfer to the photograph and the viewer.



Capture Yourself and Emotions

Do you shoot with your heart? Do you shoot with your entire soul and being?

All the photos you take are a reflection of yourself. Every photograph is a self-portrait.



Reality is often fuzzy, blurry, and unclear. So why do all your photos need to be crystal-clear? Disregard sharpness, clarity, or focus. Know that the imperfections in your photos can make your photos more personal, and more beautiful.





EMBRACE FAILURE

“Luck - or perhaps serendipity - plays a big role... But you never know what is going to happen. And what is most exciting is when the utterly unexpected happens, and you manage to be there at the right place at the right time - and push the shutter at the right moment. Most of the time it doesn't work out that way. Street photography is 99.9% about failure.”

– Alex Webb

Street photography is all about failure. Every time you click the shutter, there is only a .1% chance that you will make an interesting shot. The majority of the time, you might not get a single good shot, and feel disappointed and frustrated. But "failing" is part of the process, embrace it and learn from it.

Click the Shutter

Know that failure is a good thing. The more you fail, the more likely you are to succeed. As Thomas Edison once said: “If you want to increase your success rate, double your failure rate.”

You can control the effort, not the results. Meaning, you can put in 8 hours of shooting in one day and work really hard on your photography. You can control how many shots you take.

The more bad shots you take, the more likely you are to get a “keeper.” To succeed more, fail more.



Always Carry Your Camera

Always be prepared: always have your camera with you and always observe your scenes and environment. Every once in a while, you will be at the “right place at the right time.” If you are comfortable with your camera and skilled enough, you will also click the shutter at the right moment.



When you fail to get the shot, do not become discouraged. Rather, learn from your failures and mistakes. What caused you to miss the shot? Was it because your camera was not setup properly? Was it because your camera was in your bag (and not in your hand)? Was it because you were too nervous and did not have the courage to click the shutter?

Style & Storytelling

Style is what differentiates your art from the photos of the masses. To stand out as a photographer is to find visual consistency in your work. Also, to find your style in photography is to make photos that show your soul.

Many of us do not know our style and our voice, because we do not know who we are. Before you solidfy your 'style' in photography, do some soul-searching. Ask yourself 'why' you make photos. Figure out what kind of social statements you are trying to make in your photography. What story are you trying to tell?

At the same time, figure out what working methods fit your style. For example, you might prefer having a structure to work on your photography projects before you shoot. On the other hand, you might prefer to shoot randomly, then figure out your project and story later on by finding common themes in your work.

There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to work on a project. But think about your photography as a story. What is the beginning, middle, and end? What is the central theme? Is there a distinct voice and style?

This is your story, so make it yours.

COPY YOUR MASTER, THEN KILL YOUR MASTER

“In those days Henri Cartier-Bresson limited us to lenses from 35 mm to 90 mm. When I showed him the photos he said, ‘brilliant René!’ I went outside and shouted ‘Hah!’ He heard me and said ‘what was that?’ I said, ‘nothing, never mind’. The lens I used was 180 mm – I never told him! At that point I broke loose from my mentor. I killed my mentor!”

– Rene Burri



We all need teachers and guides when we begin to learn. The same applies to photography. You need to learn the basics, the fundamentals, and the “rules” as a beginner.

If you are new to photography start off by deliberately copying your master. Look at your favorite photographs. Then literally try to re-create the images as faithfully as you can. Use their same camera, the same aesthetic, and the same composition. Learn how to deconstruct their images, by making it yourself.

Another way to grow as a photographer is to “role play” a photographer whose work is totally different from your own.

For example, if you find yourself more of an introverted photographer who prefers not to be noticed while shooting (let's say Henri Cartier-Bresson who shot with a 50mm) -- embrace the style of a totally different photographer (let's say Bruce Gilden, who shoots up-and-close with a 28mm and flash).

By imitating a completely different photographer, you will learn valuable techniques and tools which are outside of your comfort zone. It will help expand your perspective, options, and approach.

Kill Your Masters and Their Rules

However the more experienced you become, you will start to find your own style, vision, and approach. At that point, you need to kill your master, and pave your own path. Know when to ignore them or when to go against their teachings.

Consider the “masters” of street photography simply as mentors or guides. Do not listen to them blindly, as one day you need to take off your training wheels and learn to ride on your own. You need to be your own master and set your own rules for yourself.



Rules to First Follow, then Break

- Do not crop.
- Do not zoom.
- Do not use a lens longer than 50mm or wider than 35mm.
- Do not use a flash.
- Do not interact with your subjects.
- Do not shoot color.
- Do not have out of focus photos.



DO NOT DEFINE YOURSELF

“People say you’re a documentary photographer. I don’t even know what that means. People say you are a photojournalist. I’m rarely published in journals. Then you’re a fine art photographer. Then I say I’m not. I aspire to be a fine photographer.”

– Bruce Davidson

If you try to define yourself, you will never know who you are. The more successful you become in your photography, the more others will try to put you inside a box. There is a danger to pigeon-hole yourself into one type of photography or art. It makes you trapped, and blind to other options.

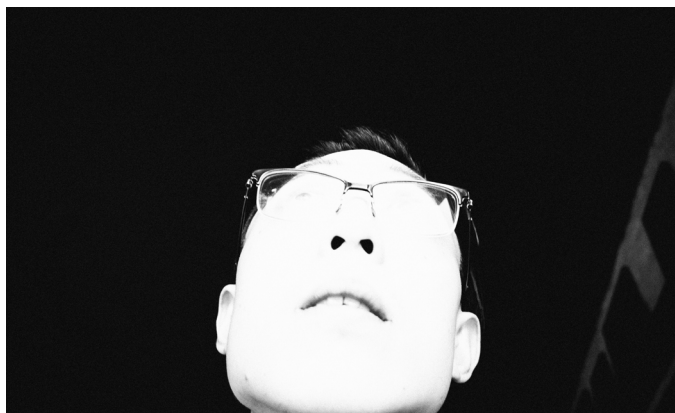
Sometimes going out and shooting with a “project” or any preconceived notions can hurt you. Why? You get tunnel-visioned, and miss out on other great photo opportunities.

Whenever I travel to a new place, I intentionally try not to do research on the place. Why? It causes me to have preconceived notions, which means I end up photographing cliches, and prevent myself from seeing other opportunities.

I believe when it comes to photography projects, you need to figure out what works for you. For some individuals, they prefer to have a concept or theme before they go out.

However for many others, shooting with a concept in mind can be paralyzing. The best part about street photography is the freedom you have in the streets. You can follow your intuition, your gut, and be spontaneous. You capture whatever you find interesting without prejudice.

Photography is all about exploration, and discovering the world. If you find that trying to focus on a “project” debilitates you -- throw the concept out of the window.



No Preconceived Notions

“I never had a ‘project.’ I would go out and shoot, follow my eyes—what they noticed, I tried to capture with my camera, for others to see.”

– Helen Levitt





Lifetime project based on a theme or subject. "Cindy Project"



SHOOT WITH A THEME

"I generally do not have a theme when in the act of photographing. Themes emerge after the photographs begin to accumulate."

– Jeff Mermelstein

CLASSIFY LATER

"I just work and I throw the pictures in a box that says "X" or whatever, and eventually if the box gets full it merits looking at. I often work on two or three or four of those things at once. People tell me that they all look like they've been well thought out, and that's because I've worked on them for so long."

– Lee Friedlander



Photo project based on location.
"Vietnam Landscapes, 2016"





“In order to build a career and to be successful, one has to be determined. One has to be ambitious. I much prefer to drink coffee, listen to music and to paint when I feel like it... Maybe I was irresponsible. But part of the pleasure of being alive is that I didn’t take everything as seriously as one should.”

– Saul Leiter



Busan, 2013 /
Self-portrait in my grandfather's bedroom.



Busan, 2013 /
My mom at the site of her old childhood home.

SHOOT FOR YOURSELF

“I’m always trying to channel those personal emotions into my work. That is very different from a lot of documentary photographers who want to depict the city more objectively. For me it is very personal – it’s about what is inside me. I don’t think about what other people will make of it. I shoot for myself.”

– Trent Parke



“Photograph who you are!” – Bruce Gilden

Photography is a journey of self-exploration and self-discovery. You do not want to just copy another photographer for the rest of your life.

You are a unique individual. The way you see the world is different from anyone else. You photograph with all of your life experiences, perspectives, and personal opinions. Your value as a photographer is determined by your viewpoint-- and how you share it with the world.

If you are an introvert, shoot like an introvert. If you are an extrovert, shoot like an extrovert. If you love people, photograph people. If you love nature, photograph nature. If you love minimalism, make simple photos. If you love complexity, make layered photographs with lots of subjects.

There is no “right” or “wrong” way to shoot photography. There is only “authentic” and “inauthentic.” Shoot who you are.



FOREVER BE AN AMATEUR

"I am an amateur and intend to remain one my whole life long. I attribute to photography the task of recording the real nature of things, their interior, their life. The photographer's art is a continuous discovery, which requires patience and time. A photograph draws its beauty from the truth with which it's marked."

– Andre Kertesz

The secret to being an inspired photographer for your entire life? Easy: forever be an amateur.

To be called an 'amateur' photographer is often seen as an insult. But the truth is: 'amateur' comes from the word 'amator', latin for 'love.' Therefore, an 'amateur' photographer is someone who shoots for the love of it. You can make money from photography and still be an 'amateur', because photography is your love.

To shoot photography for the love it means that you are 'intrinsically' driven. You do not make photos for the 'extrinsic' rewards of fame, social media followers, or money.

When we work too hard to be 'professional' and 'serious' in our photography, we forget the playful spirit of children. I believe in this concept of 'beginner's mind' -- when we are beginners, everything is new and exciting. We experiment. We play. We have fun.

Anders Petersen once said that his dream was to wander the streets, just like it was his first time. To wander the streets with the curious eye of a child. I want to do the same.

Another simple way to never lose inspiration in your photography is to avoid boredom. When you feel bored in your photography, switch things up.

Instead of shooting digital, try shooting 35mm film. Instead of always shooting in the same neighborhood, shoot in different part of town. Look at something familiar with a new fresh perspective.

And never forget to always question yourself, 'Why do I make photos?' Whenever I am in doubt, I ask myself 'why'.

For myself, I make photos to find more personal meaning in my life. To feel more connected to society. To find more appreciation in the beauty of everyday life, and to be grateful to be alive.

Nowadays, I make photos of my friends, loved ones, and family more than of strangers. Why? Because I know at the end of my life, the photos of my loved ones will matter the most.

So friend, never forget why you make photos. Never stop wondering, growing, and shooting. Be a life-long amateur photographer, and your curiosity will never die.

NEVER STOP LEARNING,

ERIC

Hello world!

by VIKTOR KOTLIK on 11/28/10 at 10:11 AM

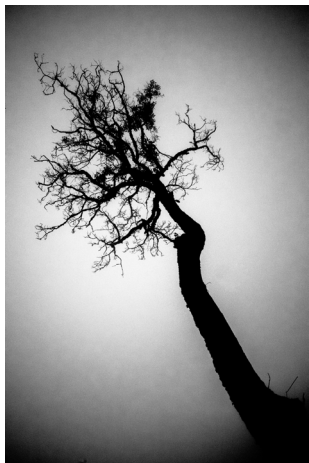
Hey guys, so this is going to be my new blog in which I will post photos, essays, tips, and insights about street photography and more. Don't worry-- cracksimplephotography.com will still be alive and well. Please leave a comment below and tell me what you think of the new look and what suggestions you think I could incorporate!



Me on the streets with my old-school Contax rangefinder

YES

to playful experiments
to dream, to wonder, to make, to see
an eternal return to the creative everyday.





NO

to dreadful apparitions of
self-doubt, anxiety, the future
that faint whisper of Fear disguised as Reason.

"HAPTIC LABS" Poem by Cindy Nguyen

GET CLOSER

SHOOT FROM YOUR GUT,

SHOOT WITH YOUR HEART

YOU ARE NOT YOUR PHOTOS

COMPOSE INTUITIVELY

INTERACT WITH YOUR SUBJECT

CREATIVE CONSTRAINTS

FEEL YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS

EMBRACE FAILURE

COPY YOUR MASTER,

THEN KILL YOUR MASTER

DO NOT DEFINE YOURSELF

SHOOT FOR YOURSELF

FOREVER BE AN AMATEUR

“If your photographs aren’t good enough, you’re not close enough.” ROBERT CAPA

“My photography is not ‘brain photography’. I put my brain under the pillow when I shoot. I shoot with my heart and with my stomach.” ANDERS PETERSEN

“Photographers mistake the emotion they feel while taking the photo as a judgment that the photograph is good.” GARRY WINOGRAND

“I try to separate myself completely from what I do. I try to step back to look at them as somebody who has nothing to do with them.” JOSEF KOUDELKA

“The biggest danger for a photographer is if they start thinking they are important.”

SEBASTIÃO SALGADO

“Composition must be one of our constant preoccupations, but at the moment of shooting it can stem only from our intuition, for we are out to capture the fugitive moment, and all the interrelationships involved are on the move.” HENRI

CARTIER-BRESSON

“Seeing is not enough; you have to feel what you photograph” ANDRE KERTESZ

"It would be mistaken to suppose that any of the best photography is come at by intellection; it is like all art, essentially the result of an intuitive process, drawing on all that the artist is rather than on anything he thinks, far less theorizes about." HELEN LEVITT

"Rather than catching people unaware, they show the face they want to show. Unposed, caught unaware, they might reveal ambiguous expressions, brows creased in vague internal contemplation, illegible, perhaps meaningless. Why not allow the subject the possibility of revealing his attitude toward life, his neighbor, even the photographer?" WILLIAM KLEIN

"Too many choices will screw up your life. Work on one thing, then expand on your canvas."

DAVID ALAN HARVEY

"Photograph who you are!" BRUCE GILDEN

"Some pictures are tentative forays without your even knowing it. They become methods. It's important to take bad pictures. It's the bad ones that have to do with what you've never done before. They can make you recognize something you had seen in a way that will make you recognize it when you see it again." DIANE

ARBUS

RESOURCES

Stay inspired with your photography with these resources.

- [Newsletter](#)
- [Workshops](#)
- [Forum](#)

ERIC KIM Blog

- [Learn from the Masters](#)
- [Street Photography Composition](#)
- [Personal Photography 101](#)
- [Start Here](#)

HAPTIC Books & Tools

- [Ultimate Beginner's Guide to Mastering Street Photography](#)
- [Street Notes](#)
- [Photo Journal](#)
- [Film Notes](#)
- [Free Street Photography Visualizations](#)
- [HAPTIC products on Amazon](#)

Video Courses

- [Ultimate Beginner's Guide to Mastering Photography by Eric Kim Complete Online Course](#)
- [Free Introduction to Street Photography Online Course](#)