

Street Photography

W a s h i n g I n s t r u c t i o n



About me and this document ?

- Thomas Leuthard, also known as 85mm
- 39 years old
- From Switzerland (Europe)
- Left-eyed
- Do mainly Street Photography Portraits
- It's real, straight and unpredictable
- This presentation is about how I see it...



<http://www.85mm.ch>

*„You miss 100% of the
shots you don't take...“*

Wayne Gretzky



„The beggar of Strasbourg“

Strasbourg, France

40mm - f/4.5 - 1/80 - ISO 200

What kind of photography do I do ?

- I do mainly unmasked portraits of strangers in the streets
 - Some people even say this is not Street Photography
 - I'm interested in the person, the face, the character
 - I always look for interesting faces
 - I don't really like shooting young people on the street
 - I go close, very close (up to 1.5m)
 - I work very often with 50mm (sometimes with 85mm)
 - My portrait photos look always very similar
 - Often they are the original format (out of the camera)
-
- Apart from that I also do other things on the street



„Wind Strength 10“

Zurich, Switzerland

85mm - f/4 - 1/200 - ISO 200





















What do you have to take care off first ?

1. It's not the camera which makes a good photo
2. The equipment is pretty equal on the streets
3. With more money, you cannot make better photos
4. With more time you can more often take pictures (=better ones)
5. Learn about the basics of photography first
6. Look at photos from other and learn from them
7. Get to know your camera before you use it
8. On the street you often have only one shot. So be prepared...
9. „If your pictures aren't good enough, you aren't close enough.“ – Robert Capa
10. There is no perfect photo, but aspire for it is essential...



„Size doesn't matter“

Emmen, Switzerland

unknown

What is Street Photography ?

- Street Photography shows the everyday moments of life
- Does not really has anything to do with streets
- As life in public happens in the streets, it show scenes on streets
- Street Photography shows people doing ordinary things
- Street Photography shows ordinary things done by people
- Street is not setup, everything is being showed as it happened

Some sub-sections might be

- Spontaneous portraits of people (unasked)
- Everyday scenes & moments
- Street performance (Artists, Beggars, etc.)
- Details of human (legs, feet, hands, etc.)
- What ever your eye may see (it's all about seeing)...







„Downtown & Brooklyn“

New York

50mm - f/3.2 - 1/50 - -0.3ev - ISO 500

What do you need ?

- A normal camera (a fast autofocus would help)
- A normal lens (e.g. 50mm or less), no tele or zoom (street is close)
- Dress not to attract attention (stay as invisible as possible)
- Good shoes (we are walking on difficult ground)
- No additional photo equipment (it's important to be lean)
- Music from your ear phone (to relax)

For any emergency you could carry also a pepper spray and the number of your local police station. But you are wearing good shoes, which should also be fast...



What makes a good Street photo ?

Not an easy question. Actually I don't really know.

I observe a lot, look at every person on the streets for a fraction of a second. I try to predict scenes upfront, try to see in front of interesting backgrounds, try to portrait characteristic faces and so on...

For that you have to observe a lot, have every person in your field of vision and be part of the masses. You cannot just stand there and wait.

It's also about composition. A good photo works only with good composition (foreground, object, background, rule of third, etc.).

I would even say that composition is 33% of an image, 33% the object and 33% the correct exposure...

VBZ Zürich Linie

Tickets

„Tickets...“

Zürich

50mm - f/4 - 1/125 ---0.7ev - ISO 400







Where do you make the best Street Photos ?

- The more people there are, the more interesting ones there are
- The bigger the city, the more interesting it is
- Bus stops, zebra crossings and shopping streets are my favorites
- Where people shortly have to stand still, you can shoot them easier
- The anonymity of big cities makes it easier to „hide“
- When there are a lot of tourists you will not show off with your cam
- On big events or festivals there are always a lot of people
- Just walk with the crowd and take random portraits
- Find an interesting background and wait until somebody appears



„The world belongs to the brave...“

Zurich, Switzerland

50mm – f/3.2 – 1/250 – ISO 200 – -0.7ev

How and where do you start ?

- Know that Street is more wide angle than zoom
- You cannot start with 50mm to do portraits of course
- You start with a zoom lens and get closer every day
- You have a simple topic/exercise at the beginning
- Train your eyes, learn to see, focus on details
- You cannot start on one day, it's a long process
- It also depends on your personal condition
- There are good days and there are bad days



„Branded...“

Dusseldorf, Germany

85mm - f/4 - 1/640 - ISO 200 - -0.33EV

Why with a prime lens ?

Why do a lot of people use prime lenses for Street Photography?

- You don't lose time finding the right focal length by zooming
- You know upfront how your frame will look like
- Prime lenses are smaller (more compact) than zoom lenses
- Prime lenses are more "light strong"
- Prime lenses are better quality and sharper
- Prime lenses are cheaper than a zoom lens in the same quality



„Freiluft Theater...“

Bern

50mm - f/4 - 1/200 - ISO 400 - -0.7ev

In color or black/white ?

- This is more a philosophy than a real question.
- I like it B/W or only little color, but that's personal
- It depends on the image (there are images that need color)
- The big masters worked all in B/W
- You can also try out color keys
- It's your choice and you have to try this out
- It's only important that you find your own style
- Because then, people may recognize your pictures



„Union Jack“

Piemonte, Italy

50mm

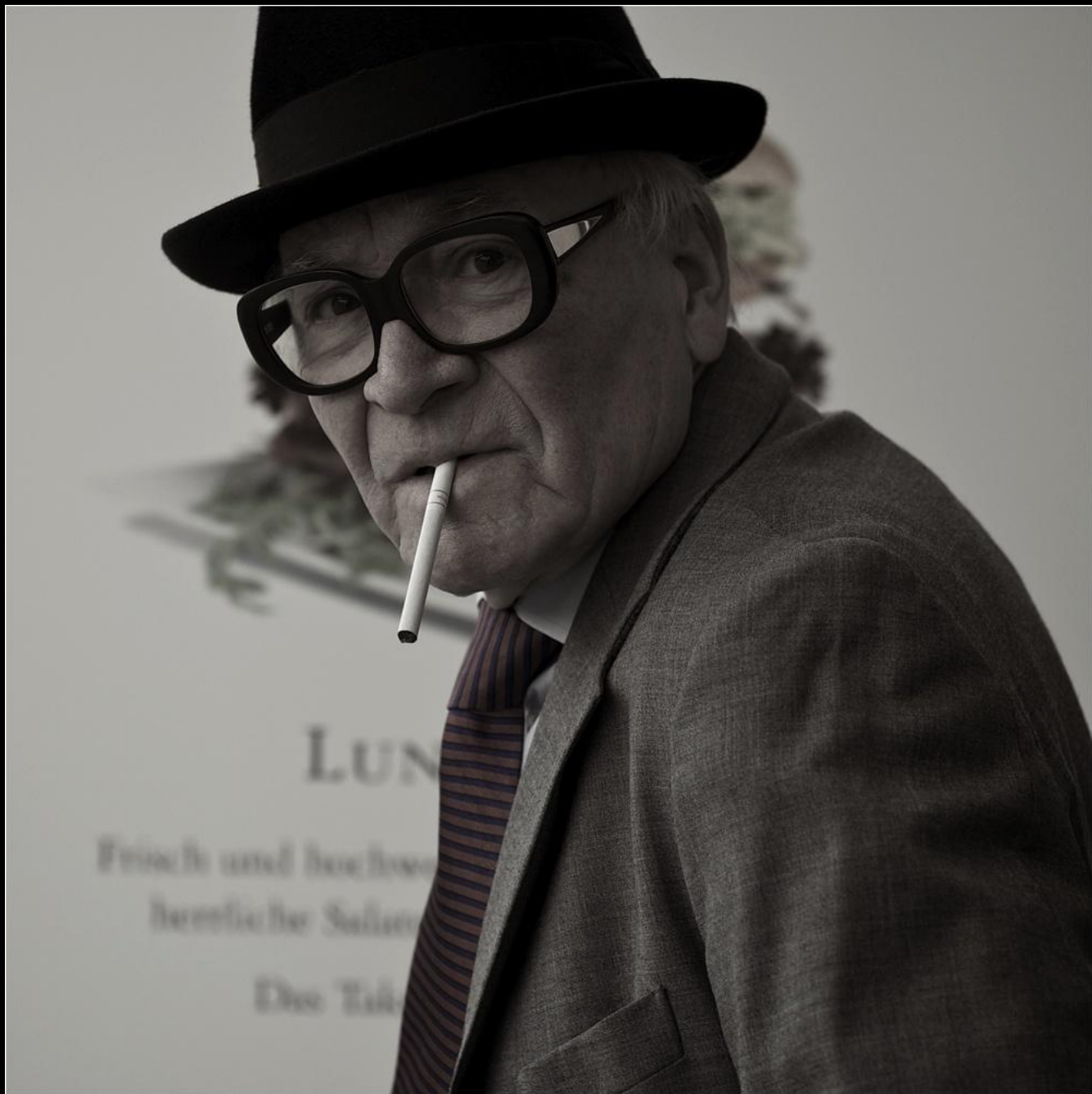
To ask or not to ask ?

This is the question people ask me most of the times. I always give them this same answer:

***„When you ask upfront, there will be no good photo.
When you ask afterwards, you have to delete a good photo.“***

So I don't even ask. Sure you are not allowed to just shoot people in the streets. But what do you want to do. You cannot always ask afterwards. This would be too much effort. It's your decision how far you can go.

I do this as long as someone comes and I will get in trouble. Then I have to re-think my strategy...



„Muratti“

Zurich, Switzerland

50mm - f/4 - 1/400 - ISO 200 - -0.7ev

How far can/should I go ?

The question about law and ethics is always being asked. For me there are no rules or limits in photography. Everybody has to define for himself where the limit is and if he should press the trigger or not. Sometimes it depends how you show someone.

I cannot tell you what is still fine and what is not. Street Photography is calculated risk, a game with fire and law. But exactly this makes this kind of photography so interesting...

Everybody sees it differently



A beggar at his „workplace“. I have put the camery on the floor to be every lower than him. You cannot see his face, but you see what he is doing. His hands are in focus as the rest is not relevant. I think you can take such a photo. There are enough people who look the other way, therefore I show it...

„Think about...“

Frankfurt, Germany

50mm - f/4 - 1/100 - ISO 200 - -0.7ev

When are you too close ?

„When you cannot focus anymore, you are too close...“



„Close to the edge“

Stuttgart, Germany

50mm - f/4 - 1/320 - ISO 400 - -0.7ev

What else do I need to know ?

- Actually nothing
- It's all about practicing
- Going out with the camera and trying.
- Shot simple things first (take a color or a special object)
- Set some limitations to focus on something specific
- Make series of photos to one topic
- Get closer to people
- Learn how to get invisible
- Realize that you are invisible
- Get used to the fact that people may stare at you
- Don't care about others, focus on your object
- Take as many photos as you can



„Panini...“

Zürich

50mm - f/2.8 - 1/800 - -0.7ev - ISO 400

What kind of tips can I give you ?

- Learn how your camera works that you can handle it in the dark
- Use the series function and always make 2-3 shots
- Focus on the person before she looks at you
- Don't get into discussions and walk away
- If somebody wants to, delete the image immediately
- Always look at every person on the street for a fraction of a second
- Look how the light is and where it comes from (helps to expose)
- Move your body and not the zoom on your lens
- Be careful not to get hit by a car or bus
- Always wear clean underwear, if you get hit by a car
- Listen to the music of John Coltrane, this relaxes me the most
- Get some friends or buddies who make Streets with you
- Exchange opinions and views about your photos
- Join virtual communities to share your photos



„Tracks & Shadows“

Zurich, Switzerland

50mm - f/13 - 1/1000 - ISO 200

How do I increase creativity ?

- Start a series with only details of people (hands, feet, glasses, etc.)
- Play with depth of field, movement and perspective
- Set yourself own exercises (colors, motives, titles, etc.)
- Look at photos from others
- Just stand at a crossroad for 15 minutes and just look at everything
- Try it with extreme composing
- Hold your camera diagonal, upside down, from the floor...
- Take an certain item and integrate it into your photos
- Try it with different and extreme formats (e.g. 1:5)
- Use an ultra wide angle and go very close
- Use a macro lens and make some photos on the street
- Shoot from the hip all day long

How to dress for success ?

- Be as invisible as possible
- Carry only what you need
- Nothing else than the camera
- Dress very decent
- Wear comfortable shoes
- Not the newest clothes
- You will lay on the floor, run, etc.
- A hand strap is very comfortable

P.S. The hat and the bag is too much...



What settings do I use ?

- A Nikon D90 with a
 - 50mm 1:1.8 D 75%
 - 85mm 1:1.8 D 15%
 - 35mm 1:2D 10%
- Mode A (Aperture priority)
- ISO 400 (sometimes also lower)
- f/4 (as my lens is the sharpest at that stop)
- Shutter automatic (Mode A)
- Exposure correction by -0.7
- Matrix measure (default)
- Series of photos (4.5 images/second)
- White Balance auto

The light is too unpredictable to shoot in manual mode and there is not enough time for more than one shot.

Some Examples...



„Sonja Bogner...“

New York

Nikon D90 - 50mm - f/4 - 1/640 - ISO 400 - -0.3ev



Theme „Movement“

Zürich

50mm - f/5.6 - 1/60 - ISO 400 - -0.7ev

A series about bags in
Hamburg (Germany).

I had to wait in front of
store while my friend
had to pee. I realized
how many people with
bags were walking by
and I started a series
with bags only.
Sometimes just parts of
people with an
interesting bag.



Thema „Bags“

Hamburg, Germany

unknown



„The Big One...“

Berlin, Germany

50mm - f/4 - 1/80 - ISO 200 - -0.7ev

The camera on the floor always gives an interesting images from an interesting perspective. You should make a series of such „Floor Shots“ one day. It's not relevant that there are only feet or legs in the image as long as the background is interesting. Don't forget the composition...



"When you have everything under control..."

Berlin, Germany

50mm - f/4 - 1/800 - ISO 200 - -0.7ev

Extreme composing makes an image often more interesting.

Here a „Floor Shot“ of a zebra crossing in Berlin (Germany). I have seen the boy, was running on the street, camera on the floor, he saw me, looked at me and at exactly this time his father gave him a push which gave him this face. Street is not predictable, it always needs some like, but you can think at least a little but upfront what could happen.

Matching Colors



„White & Blue“

Zurich, Switzerland

Foreground/Background



**KILL YOUR
HAIRDRESSER.**

„Kill your Hairdresser.“

Berne, Switzerland

50mm – f/4 – 1/250 – ISO 200 – 0.66EV

Foreground/Background



„Erfindung (Invention)“

Zurich, Switzerland

50mm – f/13 – 1/20 – ISO 400 – -0.66EV

Foreground/Background



50mm - f/14 - 1/20 - ISO 400 --07EV

Foreground/Background



Perspective



„It's not always as it looks...“

Geneve, Switzerland

50mm – f/13 – 1/25 – ISO 400 – -0.66EV

Choose your focus point



„Don't look back...“

Dusseldorf, Germany

85mm – f/4 – 1/2500 – ISO 200 – -0.33EV

Choose your focus point



„Schwedenrätsel...“

Zürich

50mm - f/2.8 - 1/1600 - -0.7ev - ISO 400

Choose your focus point

Not always the person must be in focus. Often the image gets more important when you focus on an object that on the person itself (which is still visible)...



„On a power trip“

New York



„Always these beginners...“

Emmen, Switzerland

48mm – f/4.8 – 1/1250 – ISO 400



„Making-of..“

Berlin

unknown

The most important thing is the **passion** you put into your Street Photography. Everything else is not relevant and will come by itself. I took about 120'000 shots with my Nikon D90 in 2 years. Not all were good, but there are some...

Thank you...

`http://www.85mm.ch`

There is one more thing ?

***„Shooting in the streets is a way of life,
not a way of earning money...“***

Thomas Leuthard