(Approx. 519 words)

Hit the Streets!  
By Lynda Buske

Published in Ottawa PC News (September 2023)  
Ottawa PC Users' Group, Ontario, Canada

<https://opcug.ca>  
Editor: brigittelord(at)opcug.ca

Wikipedia says street photography features subjects (usually people) in candid situations within public places. The image may exclude humans and be an object that projects a human character or environment. For example, it may show the beauty of a flower stall or an interesting sign. Some photographers use street photography to make a social comment on issues such as homelessness or racism.

Street photography might require engaging in a conversation with a stranger to get the best shot. This can be daunting for anyone who is a bit introverted. Vendors are probably the most approachable if you are new to street photography and are willing to pose or share details of their craft if you buy something. So, if you are buying vegetables anyway in an outdoor market, choose a stall that may result in a nice photo.



Street musicians are another great place to start because they are happy to pose if you throw a bit of change into their hat.



You can also ask permission to take someone's photo, as I did with this lady from Saskatoon. I gave her my card so she could write me if she wanted the photo of her relaxing afternoon in a Halifax Harbour hammock.



Canadian laws are not strict when it comes to photographing people in public, but they check when visiting a foreign country to know what is permissible. In Canada, it is perfectly legal to take someone's photograph while they are in public, providing you are not harassing or stalking them, and the photo is not for commercial purposes (if an identifiable person is the main subject).

However, in order not to infringe on someone's privacy or make them uncomfortable (especially mothers with respect to their children), it never hurts to ask permission or be very quick. If I'm not getting permission, I will set up my shot while pointing in a slightly different direction and swing back only at the last minute to my intended target. A tip is to hold the camera at waist level and shoot from there, although it will take some practice to get to know what will be captured from this angle. Another way is to shoot at a wider angle than you need and straighten/crop afterward.

Cell phones are in some ways better than traditional cameras because they are less obvious, and you can pretend you are taking a selfie! This is especially easy in high tourist areas where any number of people will have visible cameras and cell phones.

I am very careful with children in public as it can be very distressing for the parents to see someone take multiple photos of their child. I take a couple from far away and only post them if their faces are obscured. Never post a child's photo online taken with a cell phone (or camera with GPS) that includes their name. A bad person can find the exact location and call the child to their car by name….not good.

