



The Art of Street Photography

Alternative Approaches

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01

Large Format with Mark Power

“[Photography is] my way of engaging with the world. It’s a passport to be nosy. It’s a reason to be in a particular place... to respond to it in my own way, and bring back something that I hope may be of interest to others.”

– **Mark Power**

The large-format view camera is not very often associated with street photography; however, many artists have created compelling work in the street using this slow, bulky set-up. In the introduction to this lesson, Mark Power references Eugene Atget, a French photographer who set out to document the changing face of Paris at the turn of the 20th century and is often included in anthologies on the history of street photography.

For Power, this technical, slow, and considered approach allows him to make photographs that reflect how he sees the world. He isn’t interested in using wide-angle lenses to bring added dynamism; he wants to create work that is as close to reality as possible. Another advantage for Power is that despite the sizable and elaborate set-up, consisting of an unusual camera, a large tripod plus the theatricality of using a dark cloth, once settled, he tends to disappear; he becomes part of the “street furniture”, immobile, hiding in plain sight.



“It never ceases to amaze me how you just stay still for two or three minutes, and nobody notices you anymore. It allows me to make pictures of the world that feel very, very natural [where] nobody’s playing up to the camera.”

Once Power has faded into the background and the world has stopped noticing him, he waits patiently for the right moment to press the shutter within a highly constructed frame.

“I want to make pictures which are really static, that feel like moments between moments.”

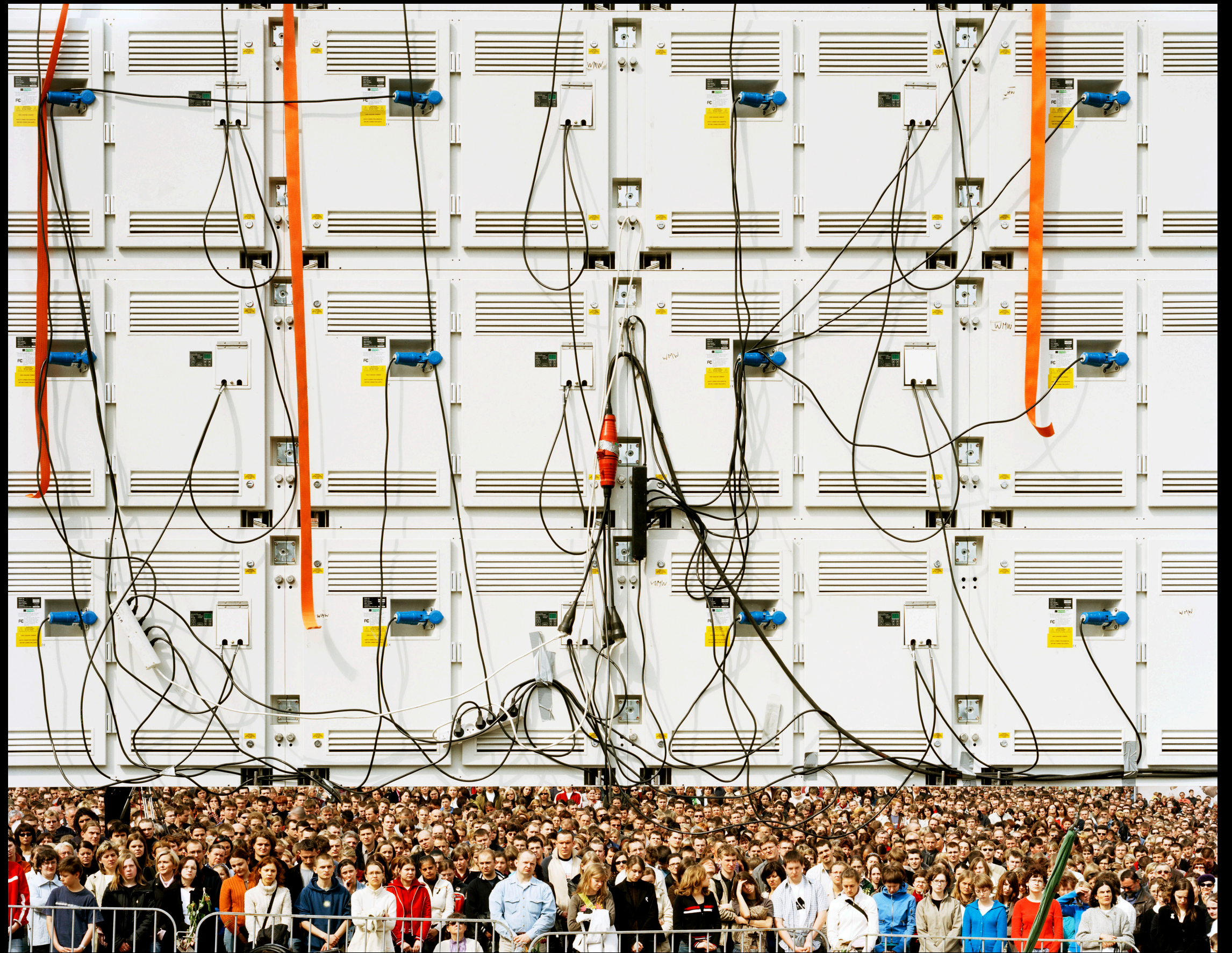
This approach to street photography takes a step back from the crowd and presents a broader, often quiet and contemplative view of the world. To bring in some components of this approach into your practice, you do not necessarily need a large-format camera; stepping back from the scene, using a tripod to slow down your process, and using the “live-view” function of a digital camera to mimic the ground glass of the large format view camera, are all strategies to consider.

Exercise

See how people respond to your presence in the street and whether this is different to normal. Think about what difference this approach makes to the feeling in your photographs.



Mark Power
Poland, 2005.







02

Assignment: Photograph your Neighborhood

During this episode, Power describes how photographers are often compelled to venture to exotic or far away locations because of the visual excitement they offer. He argues that, in fact, the best place to hone your skills is in your local area. While this can be a very challenging thing to do, Power's task is to make work close to home, asking yourself what new perspectives may be gained by working in your local area.

“It's very important that you hone your skills in your local area, that you get to understand how to construct pictures, how to interact with people. You don't have to go to the other side of the world to do that.”

Share your pictures from this assignment using the hashtags:
#magnumlearn
#photographneighborhood

03

Mobile Photography

For many of us the best camera we have is in our pocket.

As mobile technology has rapidly improved over recent decades, so has the proliferation and democratization of photography. Today, the majority of people own a smartphone and therefore carry with them an easy-to-use, high-quality camera in their pocket. There is a vibrant community of street photographers using solely mobile phones to make photographs, and many professional photographers have adopted mobile into their wider toolset.

Magnum photographer Gueorgui Pinkahossv regularly uses his iPhone to create work in the street and then uses Instagram to share it. Some of these photographs were published as a monograph in 2017. Learn more about it [here](#).

04 Collaborative Working

Take inspiration from Carolyn Drake's collaborative approach in *Wild Pigeon*, and Mark Power's joint project with poet Daniel Cockrill.

Photography is often a solitary activity; working in isolation it can be a difficult and lonely experience. What might help is to open up your practice to collaborative working. This can come in many different forms, from working on a joint project with a friend to using the photograph as a starting point for multimedia work.

Included here are a few examples for inspiration:

Carolyn Drake, *Wild Pigeon*

Carolyn Drake reveals the thinking behind her collaborations with Uyghurs in China. [Learn more.](#)

Mark Power, *Destroying the Laboratory
for the Sake of the Experiment*

Mark Power and poet Daniel Cockrill riff on each other's work for a joint publishing project. [Learn more.](#)

05

Further Reading

[Mark Power: The Shipping Forecast](#)

[Mark Power: Good Morning, America](#)

[Gueorgui Pinkhassov: Sophistication Simplification](#)

[Carolyn Drake: Wild Pigeon](#)

[Destroying the Laboratory for the Sake of the Experiment](#)

[Get the book: Mark Power, DTLFTSOTE](#)

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