



GUIDES

**TAKING
INTERESTING
PHOTOS IN
UNINTERESTING
LOCATIONS**

Having spent the past several months traveling extensively to some pretty exciting places, coming back home to small-town suburbia was a rude awakening for me to say the least. I was so used to having interesting subjects – be it people, landscapes, flora and fauna – at my doorstep everyday. I didn't have to think much about what I wanted to photograph, I could just step outside and find something new and interesting every time.

But once I got home and settled into my routine, I started to experience PW (photographer withdrawal). There really was nothing for me to photograph, right? How many times can I photograph the same bush, the same tree, the same pond and the same ducks?

You see being smack-dab in the middle of American suburbia, this is the extent of my daily views. But then I realized that there are some simple ways to make an uninteresting location a bit more interesting! Here are six tips to help you do that.

01 *Change your perspective*

Sometimes it's just about changing the way you look at things, literally. Let's say you have pine trees in your neighborhood. Nothing fancy – simple pine trees that are quite abundant in most areas. Have you ever tried to look at one through a macro lens? Maybe you can capture individual blades of pine needles. How does the tree look when it snows? Can you isolate the snow on the pine needles? All of these things provide a potential for interesting photographs. Just change your perspective a complete 360 from what you normally do!

#Get in close

Try looking at the same boring thing with a new or different lens. A macro lens or even a close-up filter is a nice way to get up close and personal to an otherwise boring subject.

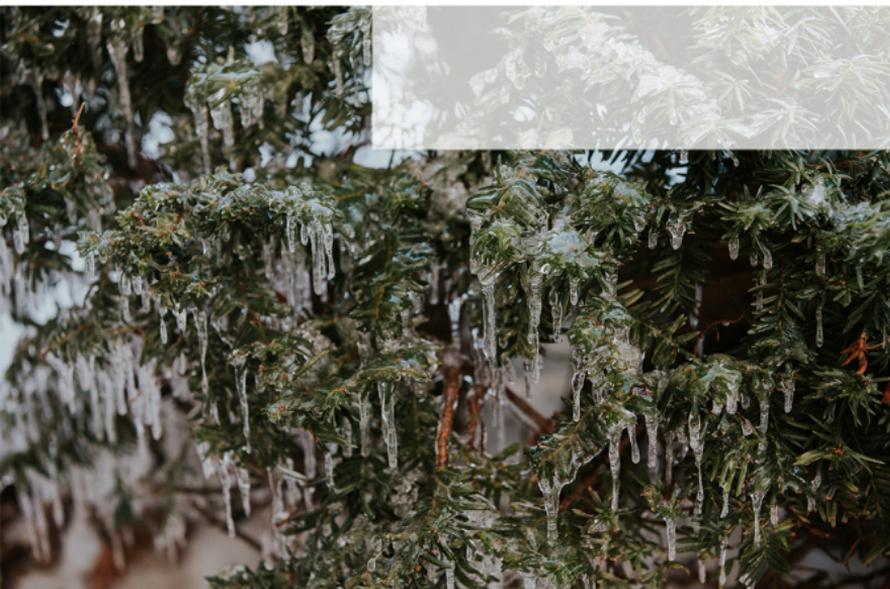
Seen here: The image on the left is the neighborhood pond in winter. Nothing exciting ever happens there. But this past winter we had an ice storm that covered the tree in ice. It made for some interesting compositions and very cool macro shots!



#Try wider angles

The opposite of getting in close is to try something that encompasses the whole scene. Try using a wide-angle or ultra-wide angle lens to change your perspective of the scene in front of you.

Seen here: I used a wider angle (35mm) to try and encompass the whole extent of ice on the tree. I quite like how the ice is hanging off the branches. I almost got frostbite from being outside in this cold but quite worth the shot, don't you think?



#Get the details/textures

Textures are a wonderful way to look at the details in and around an object. The play of color, age and grain make for great abstract imagery. Plus by getting into the minutia you can ignore all the other stuff around that might not be so pretty and/or click-worthy.

Seen here: The ice patterns on the leaves make for such interesting patterns and textures.

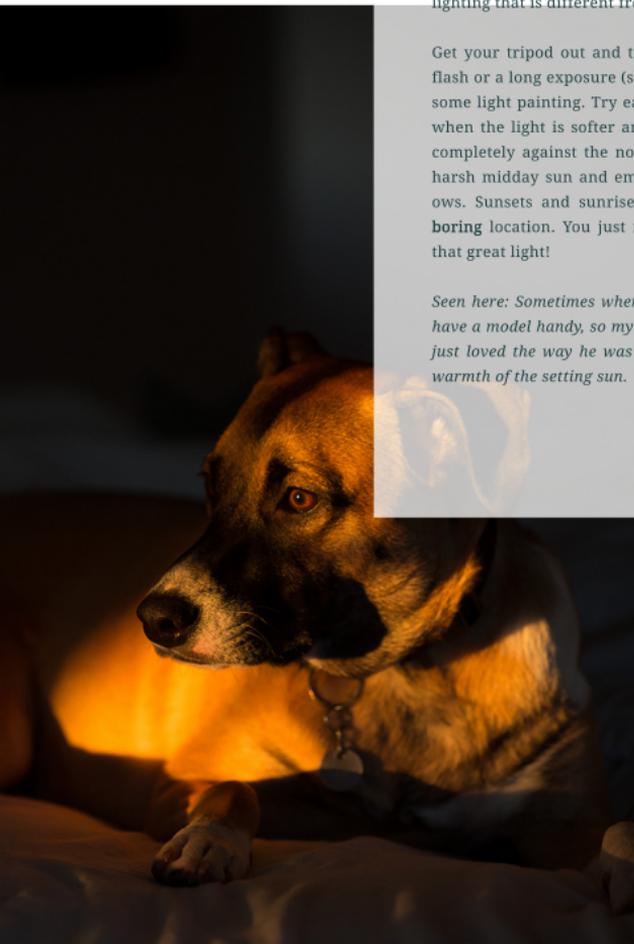


02 Experiment with different light

Light is one of the most important elements in photography. Sometimes boring doesn't have anything to do with the location, but with the quality of the light at the time that you are shooting. If you feel that what you have around you is really uninteresting, try photographing the scene or subject in lighting that is different from what you usually do.

Get your tripod out and try photographing at night with a flash or a long exposure (slow shutter speed) combined with some light painting. Try early morning or golden hour light when the light is softer and the shadows are longer. Or go completely against the norm and try photographing in the harsh midday sun and embrace the play of light and shadows. Sunsets and sunrises are perfect to spruce up your boring location. You just need get outside and photograph that great light!

Seen here: Sometimes when the light is just right and I don't have a model handy, so my dog is the one who poses for me. I just loved the way he was sitting in the light basking in the warmth of the setting sun.



03 Try simple special effects

This ties into the point above. Using simple tools like a tripod, off-camera flash, gels, etc., can add an element of interest and change to your otherwise boring images.

Some other ideas to try are motion-blur with a really low shutter speed and a fast-moving subject, intentionally missing focus to create an artistic image, panning while tracking a moving object, double exposures, free-lensing, etc.

Seen here: I absolutely love double exposures. When all else fails and there is nothing of interest to photograph, I try to combine nature and portraits to create some cool double exposure effect. More often than not, my pet is the only willing and able model!!



04 Break photography composition rules

We all know the basic rules of compositions such as; the rule of thirds, filling the frame, cropping effectively without cutting body parts, using leading lines and shapes, symmetry and patterns, pay attention to the background, etc. But sometimes when you are not quite feeling motivated and inspired or when you are dealing with an uninteresting background, try breaking some or all these rules to add some interest and drama to your images.

Seen here: I loved the way my neighbor's tree burst into flowers over the spring. So after much coercion and bribing, my daughter agreed to pose – but she refused to look at the camera. So I covered her eyes, cropped off her arms and create a different kind of portrait with the florals that I loved.



05 Try street photography

Street photography is an interesting genre of photography because it involves people and people watching is always fun and entertaining, no matter where you are.

06 Experiment in post

If none of these ideas inspire you, try to create something fun and interesting in post-processing. My post-processing software of choice is Lightroom. Perhaps you want to try HDR processing for your images, or a black and white theme. You can also use selective blur, gradient filters, and other tools to try sprucing up your images to create something interesting and fun.

Seen here: Left is how I would normally process this image, and the image on the right is just experimenting with darker, moodier tones. I quite like them both and spend hours playing around with editing styles for this article.



Conclusion

I hope these ideas get your creative juices flowing in terms of things to try and experiment with in your photography when you feel your location is uninteresting and boring.

Remember, memorable images don't always happen in cool, popular places – they happen when something simple or mundane still tells an interesting story.





Thank you!

I hope these tips help you to think outside the box when you are feeling uninspired by what is around you. Remember your perspective is always unique, since there is only one of you in this world!

Note: The materials in this PDF are for people who are interested in learning and improving their photography. No part of this PDF and its images may be reproduced, forwarded, copy or distribute without my permission.

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EMAIL ME: KARTHIKA@KARTHIKAGUPTA.COM



f @KARTHIKAGUPTA

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