

A Photograph is an Instant Sketch of Life

The Power of the Instant Sketch

A photograph, to me, is nothing more than an **instant sketch of life**. Walking down Market Street in Philadelphia, I'm reminded of this simple truth: street photography is about capturing life in its purest, most unfiltered form. When we create candid photography on the streets, we're not shaping reality; we're merely responding to it. This visual reaction becomes a dance with life itself, where each frame is an instant sketch—an unplanned expression of a moment.

"We're basically making instant sketches of life, creating a work of art as we frame it within the camera."

Embracing Simplicity: The High-Contrast Approach

One of the reasons I favor high-contrast black and white and small JPEG files is that it **strips away all the unnecessary layers** of post-processing. There's no need for cropping or complex edits. Unlike traditional photography practices—whether it's digital processing in Lightroom or developing film in a dark room—this method captures an image in its most straightforward form. It's about allowing the photograph to stand on its own as a raw and immediate sketch of the world.

The Photograph as the New Cave Painting

Photography carries the same fundamental purpose as the earliest cave paintings: to depict life, to leave behind a record. As I pass by historic landmarks, I'm struck by the realization that **photographs are our modern-day cave paintings**. They are visual imprints of our experiences, drawings of life captured by light. Future generations may view these images much as we do the artwork on ancient walls—a glimpse into how we lived, what we saw, and how we felt.

"The photograph is the new cave painting, showcasing the infinite beauty and perspectives of life."

Loosening Up: Letting Life Flow Towards the Lens

Street photography encourages a loose approach. By photographing without rigid intentions or set themes, we simply experience life as it flows toward us. There's an elegance in photographing loosely, allowing reality to shape the image without forcing meaning or purpose onto it. **Life unfolds as it will**; our role as photographers is simply to capture it, to be open and receptive to the moments as they happen.

Depicting Reality: A Unique Form of Art

Each photograph, each instant sketch, carries with it a reality that is both **immediate and timeless**. The high-contrast aesthetic abstracts reality, infusing the image with drama and a deeper sense of emotion. Photography, much like painting or drawing, is a medium that preserves life's details. But the beauty of photography lies in its accessibility and simplicity. With the click of a shutter, we can create something that resonates across generations, a visual testament to life's fleeting beauty.

"A photograph can last generations as an instant sketch of life."

Street photography, at its core, is about celebrating the world around us. It's a practice that values simplicity, that encourages us to create without overthinking. By viewing each photograph as an instant sketch, we free ourselves from expectations and embrace the purity of capturing life in real time. **Let life flow toward you, frame by frame, and create lasting sketches that speak to the truth of our shared human experience.**