

To Photograph is to Be

Photography is not simply a tool to capture the world; it's a way of *being* in it. To photograph is to live, to experience each moment, and to remain fully present. As I walk through Philadelphia, Chinatown, or even a quiet park, my goal is not just to make a "hero shot" but to connect with the world in real time, through my camera, through play, and through seeing.

The LCD vs. the Viewfinder

I believe that the **LCD screen is superior to the viewfinder**. Using the LCD screen offers a freedom that the viewfinder simply cannot. The viewfinder can feel limiting—like a filter through which you're supposed to see, yet it can narrow the vision to just one frame. *With the Ricoh, I don't even look through the screen half the time.* It allows me to photograph with a looser approach, to snap away freely without getting caught up in the technicalities. This spontaneity, this stream of consciousness approach, creates a space for a genuine encounter with life.

"The viewfinder is a limiting tool. To photograph freely and follow your stream of consciousness, sometimes you don't even need to look."

Capturing the Details

I'm increasingly drawn to the **details of the streets** around me. Philadelphia, being my hometown, is like an old friend whose subtleties I know well yet constantly rediscover. I focus on reflections in windows, textures on walls, and even the way light shapes ordinary buildings. By capturing these small, often-overlooked elements, I find myself telling a richer, fuller story of the city. The beauty of this approach is that *each detail becomes a piece of a larger narrative* about the place I call home.

Telling the Full Story

While a single striking image can have power, **photography is about more than just creating that one hero shot.** Repetition—returning to the same locations day after day—reveals new perspectives. Every street holds layers of history, and each pass through reveals something I hadn't noticed before. This commitment to exploring the familiar gives me freedom, removing the pressure to achieve perfection with every shot.

Photography as a Form of Memory

When I look back at my photos, I see memories come to life. Photography for me is deeply tied to memory—it's a proof of experience, a physical record of *what was*. I often wish I had more videos of past moments, but photography itself is enough. It preserves the experience and, in some ways, transforms it.

"To photograph is to remember. The photographs become our memory, our stream of becoming."

Transcending Time and Finding Peace

Photography gives us a chance to transcend time. I believe that, in a way, to photograph is to exist outside the passage of time. Through the lens, the mundane becomes extraordinary. It's a reminder that life is fleeting, yet within that transience lies endless beauty. Like the changing leaves in autumn, life is a series of transformations. To photograph is to acknowledge our place in this ever-changing world.

"To photograph is to be in a state of flux, to embrace change and continue moving in a stream of becoming."

The Power of the Mundane

There's something sacred in photographing the mundane. I don't aim to make perfect representations of reality but rather abstractions—images of what life *could be*. Photography isn't about perfection; it's about capturing the essence of life, even in its ordinary moments. My work becomes an exercise in turning the mundane into the extraordinary, a reflection of my own perspective on life itself.

Embracing the Process

The ultimate goal, as I see it, is to **photograph until the day I die**. This pursuit is not about creating award-winning images or gaining recognition. It's about play, curiosity, and allowing myself to be fully present. Each photograph is a way to ground myself in the moment, to strip away distractions and just *be*. When I have my camera, I see life itself more clearly, with a deep appreciation for both its chaos and its peace. The joy of photography lies in the journey, the continuous growth, and the transformation it provides.

"Photography has nothing to do with making photographs but everything to do with increasing your lust for life itself."

Conclusion

To photograph is to be. Through the camera, I hone my vision, strengthen my connection to the world, and cultivate a deep love for life. Photography, in this way, isn't just about the image but about who we become in the process—always evolving, always in flux, and always finding beauty in what lies before us.

On this beautiful fall day, I carry my camera as a reminder to keep looking, to keep playing, and to keep becoming.