

## **The intersection between order and chaos**

When I set out for the day, I make sure to embrace the spirit of play. For life is too short to take it so seriously. Chaos is the name of the game, and what elevates the seemingly banal, boring, or mundane. Through movement, we are always in flux, ever changing.

*A rolling stone gathers no moss - Publius Syrus*

What is motivation, but merely the movement of your two legs? When I consider photography, I believe that the ultimate goal is to walk more, to move more, and experience more. For the more that you walk, the more that you will see, and the more that you will see and experience, the more that you will ultimately photograph.

*Is this not our aim as photographers? Is this not our ultimate goal?*

So, with this in mind, I say, move! Let's never sit still, remain stagnant, or complacent. Let's embrace the chaotic nature of life, and champion it. As street photographers, we thrive in chaos, the unknown, and the spontaneous.

## **We must embrace the Dionysian spirit**

Trust your gut and follow your intuition. I believe that we all possess a Godlike intuition, and maybe it is Dionysius himself. We should embrace the primal urges within us, following our desires, with ecstasy and intoxication.

Considering Dionysius was the god of wine and fertility, he's often depicted being worshiped by men and women, intoxicated, partying, or drunk. I think we can still embrace this Dionysian spirit without the use of drugs or alcohol. However, maybe we should just slam four shots of espresso? I guess that's considered a drug, but it's fair game to me!

Life, the world, the streets are my drugs. The multifaceted complexities, the simple sensual experience, sights, sounds, and smells, fuel me with ecstasy. For life is unpredictable, and we never know when it will be our last. Just wake up early in the morning, before the sun rises, and listen to the birds sing, it's like you're having a communion with the gods. So let's champion this day, dance through the streets with ecstasy, and praise our new God, Dionysius.

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### **I don't want to be human**

Being human is boring? When you think of a human, especially in modernity, what do they merely do, but consume? I say, let's destroy, and create again!

When I was a kid, I remember spending time in the backyard, in the grass, looking at ant colonies, and how they marched one by one into the anthill. There was something instinctual in me when I was a child, when I was exploring nature, to play, tinker, and destroy. I would dissect the caterpillars, slugs, and even use a magnifying glass to burn down the colonies. I have always been curious about the natural world and living creatures around me. I would also build bridges with stones, tipis with sticks, and explore the forest.

As a child, you don't really have any concepts of life or death, but are merely curious about life itself. I will never forget when I first learned about the angel of death during one of my classes in Catholic school as a young boy. From what I remember, it was during one of our arts and crafts projects, where we were coloring pictures of angels, and the angel of death was one of them. I don't know why, but it haunted me, and I remember getting bad sleep that night. I went into my mother's room, into the bathroom, looking at the mirror, at myself, questioning my mortality, and if I will die one day.

Maybe it is when you set the fear of death aside, that you can truly be free?

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## **Stay out of the shade**

Think of a boulder, a rock, perfectly positioned by the river, in the shade. It is almost inevitable that this rock will grow moss, for the environment is damp, and the conditions are ideal for moss to thrive. Over time, the moss will grow over the rock, creating a soft and green cover, a cozy blanket for this hard surface.

It is very easy for humans to become accustomed to comfortable and cozy conditions, such as air conditioning, or the cool breeze in the shade. These external factors, make man soft, like the moss growing on a rock. However, let's remain hard, like a rock.

## **Detach from the outcome**

Man is emotional, but maybe sometimes overly emotional. It is inevitable, that certain words, actions, or even thoughts can bubble up inside you, causing an emotional reaction.

Consider the endocrine system and the way our hormones are secreted throughout our bloodstream and bodies. The way our hormones fire, and trigger the different parts of our body, organs, brain, and as men, testicles affect our metabolism, development, and mood.

I think we must pay attention to what we consume more, in the context of both food, and media. Whether it's text messages, emails, videos, news, or the processed junk that's filling the grocery stores these days. All of this stuff will influence the way that you feel. The more you shed these external distractions, this moss, the harder you rock will become.

*"Man's character is his fate." - Heraclitus*

In the myth of Sisyphus, he was punished by Zeus, to move a boulder uphill, only to have it roll back down over and over again, before he reaches the top, participating in futile labor for all of eternity.

It may seem frustrating, depressing even, to never reach your goals, but what if we learn to love the pain, the suffering, the ups, and the downs. Then what?

I believe by championing all of the emotions, with vigor, and strength, we can become superhuman. Perhaps it is only then, that we become the true übermensch.

***Amor Fati*** - Friedrich Nietzsche

Pain is inevitable. Heartbreak is inevitable. Suffering is inevitable. When you recognize this fate, and love it, nothing can hurt you, nothing can break your spirit, and your lust for life will remain unquenchable!

### **Take all of the arrows**

When I was in high school, I used to come home, and play League of Legends. My favorite character was blitzcrank, a near indestructible robot. I would rush through the lanes, taking all of the shots from the champions, turrets and minions. Blitzcrank was a tank and support champion. I loved armoring him, with the maximum defense as possible, using his shield, and taking all the shots for my teammates. I would simply be the protector, the support character, using his grappling hook to pull the enemy in, taking all of the damage, and letting the rest of my team follow through with the kill.

*So, who do we sacrifice ourselves for if we have no team?*

Maybe self sacrifice is a virtue after all, but I choose to sacrifice myself for myself.

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### **Why you should make a home gym**

One of the greatest decisions I made during the Covid pandemic was creating a home gym. I went to [rogue.com](https://www.rogue.com), purchased a squat rack, some adjustable dumbbells, barbell, and plates. Because of the gym shutdowns, it just made sense to me, as I've always been very passionate about health and fitness. Now, I'm really grateful I've done so, because now when I wake up in the morning, I can hit the gym right away, without the need of a gym membership, or wasting time walking to a gym, dealing with all of the people there. Personally, I enjoy the comfort of working out in silence, on my own, without any distractions. The most recent item I added to my gym is the rogue 40 pound plate carrier. This thing is a beast, and I've been wearing it for one week now, going for an hour walk in the morning. this was probably the best thing I've added to my home gym set up, because I love going for my morning walk, and after hitting some pull ups, dips, push-ups, squats, etc. I can then go for a simple stroll, focusing on my posture, through an intensive full body experience, wearing the vest. I think anything that requires your body to move through weightlifting is probably the most optimal strategy to increasing our strength. For the past two years, I've been doing a farmers walk with 80 pound dumbbells in the morning, simply picking them up, walking them out, and putting them back down. I believe this has influenced the way I think about strength and health, as perhaps grip strength, and being able to simply hold these two heavy dumbbells by your side, and walk with them, is the ultimate sign of strength.

One of my biggest changes in the past two years is my diet. I've embraced a 100% carnivore diet, eating only red meat for two years now. Before that, I would pretty much just eat anything. I would go to chipotle, the old Nelson and Philadelphia, eat sandwiches, fruits, vegetables, starches, etc. I never really thought about my diet at all. However, what I can tell you is, since adopting a 100% carnivore diet, I've actually seen gains from my fitness journey. I've always had strength, and a decent physique, but nothing like what I have now. It's actually crazy how only a few months after being on the carnivore diet, completely transformed my body. It makes me never wanna stop, as I found the perfect solution for me, as I am a photographer, always out, exploring, and don't really like taking the time out to eat during the day. I just fast, no breakfast, or lunch, and then at the end of the day, feast like a God. I believe through increasing my power, by weightlifting, and eating more, I'm becoming a stronger photographer.

## **Hypertrophy**

*Strong photographer, strong photographs.*

It is inevitable that you will become a stronger photographer, through increasing your physical strength. Consider weightlifting, and hypertrophy. The more you fire, those muscles, both visual and physical, the more gains you will see in the gym. But it's only after a lot of time, and putting in the effort, that you'll ever see the results. When you embrace the streets, and photography, we should think of it this way too. Through practicing weightlifting and street photography, you remain resilient. By embracing the process, and understanding how much time practicing is required to see results, you can move onward, detached from the outcome. Just enjoy the process, the experience of both lifting, and shooting, daily, with repetition, and it is inevitable that over time, you will become a stronger photographer.

## **Cameras and gear**

I believe if Bresson was alive today, he would be using a Ricoh GRIII. Think of agility, movement, and the compact nature of the Ricoh, being a lightweight solution for the streets.

“A velvet hand, a hawk’s eye—these we should all have.” - Henri Cartier-Bresson

Photography is both a visual game and a physical pleasure. We must have a sharp, visual acuity, a keen sense for geometry, form, and shapes, as much as we are in tune with our physical body, movement, and remaining delicate on the streets.

Put on your dancing shoes, and pick up a pair of Vibram Five Finger EL-X. Shoes are something that we overlook at street photographers, and maybe not talked about as much? As much as cameras, lenses, and accessories are intriguing to most photographers, I believe that shoes are the most critical. With barefoot shoes, you remain nimble, connected to the earth, the ground below you, the streets, and are one with the concrete. It sounds woo woo, or mystical, but I believe it's true through my empirical experience of using the shoes. you really do enter this Zen like meditative practice of walking through the world, recognizing the patterns of both nature, and human behavior, from the ground up.

The Ricoh GRIII, on a wrist wrap, becomes the truest extension of your hand, your body, and your eye. You almost forget that you have a camera with you, and simply become one with the camera itself. If Bresson was alive today, he'd be rocking the Vibram Five Finger shoes and a Ricoh on a wrist strap.

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## **Get rid of the old**

During my recent trip to Hanoi, Vietnam, I hit a breaking point in my photography. I spent a lot of time, waking up really early, joining in with the locals in some yoga, looking out towards this tranquil lake. I remember noticing how vibrant and lively the community was around this lake, and how the streets would close down on the weekends, and families would gather. There were so many happy, smiling faces, mothers and fathers with her children, and just good vibes overall. I started to question my life, photography, philosophy, and how to move forward.

I think I hit a wall with my previous practice, and so when I came home to United States, I went straight to New York City, to B&H, and sold all of my Fujifilm camera equipment, and replaced it with the Ricoh.

I think what I've realized is, as much as I am an active participant in life, getting closer and closer to life, both physically and emotionally, throughout all of my travels, I truly was the bystander, or the observer. While I am on the front lines of life, with my camera, there was something about my process that actually made me feel like I was on the sidelines, just watching other peoples lives. I've sacrificed personal development, personal life, time with friends, family, etc, in pursuit of my own artistic practice. While I am grateful I have put in so much time and dedication to it, I know that it's time to move on.

I now treat my photography practice as a personal diary, just documenting my everyday life, no matter how mundane, or boring it may be. I'm more into the Vivian Maier approach nowadays, just shooting what catches my fancy, or sparks my own personal curiosities. I'm no longer interested in the "art of photography, if that

makes any sense. I'm just interested in life, and living my own personal life, to the fullest. I decided to move on from my past ways of doing things, and approach to life in general.

At this point, I'm just heading onward, into the unknown, photographing for the sake of photographing because I absolutely love to and have to. I have an insatiable lust for life, and recognize that there is so much to experience. I just remind myself that life is outside of my window, on the front lines of life. I simply use my camera as the excuse to get me there.

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