

The Freedom of the Flâneur

The Magic of Winter Light

The winter light is something to behold. There's a special quality to it—strips of light that cut through the cold air, reflecting off buildings like the Masonic Temple, and hitting everything differently. There's a sharpness to winter sunlight, a clarity that reveals more than it hides. The way it falls, like layers of time unfolding, makes me feel like it's a privilege just to be here, capturing it.

Street Rhythms and Small Moments

Today, as I walk these streets, my friend Rome's trumpet fills the background, his notes echoing through the City Hall tunnel. He's always out here, playing in his own world. We've talked about everything from fitness to using liquid chalk—still have some of that residue on my hands. Rome's music, the winter light, and the rhythm of the city blend together, making each moment feel alive. It's these small interactions that make street photography so special—moments that might otherwise pass unnoticed but are made meaningful by the lens.

Capturing What You See

I'm out here shooting with my Ricoh GR IIIx, using the 40mm lens. Small JPEGs, high contrast, black and white—everything baked right into the camera. What you see is what you get. There's something honest about that approach, where every frame is a decision, a moment locked in time. It's all about embracing the mundane. As a photographer, this is where I thrive. It's in the subtle shifts of light, the way it brushes against a building's edge or highlights a passerby's face. It's in the skateboarder cruising by or the delicate dance of feet on concrete.

Photography as Pattern Recognition

Photography is all about pattern recognition. It's about looking at life intensely, noticing the flow of light, the small gestures of people moving through their day. Without a camera, walking from point A to point B might mean missing these things—being lost in a destination instead of the journey. But with a camera in hand, I become a flâneur, a wanderer with no set path, no schedule. Street photography is pure freedom. It's the chance to get lost in my own city, to treat it as if I'm a tourist, finding new perspectives on familiar sights.

Finding New Perspectives in the Old

Take the PSFS Building, one of the first skyscrapers in the United States. I pass by it often, but each time, the way the light hits it makes it new. There's beauty in the architecture, in the history, in the feeling of the concrete beneath my feet. It's like watching the seasons change, seeing a dead leaf as a symbol of time's passage. The winter brings a different light, a shift that's more than just the change in temperature. It's a reminder of life's constant evolution.

Photography as a Journey of Becoming

This is where photography meets philosophy for me. I see my daily practice as a process of becoming, of chipping away at the world and at myself. Each photo I take is a step forward, a way of honing my vision and discovering more about who I am. Photography is an excuse to look deeply, to exist in a state of flux where everything is in motion, where each frame is a new chance to see.

Embracing Chaos on the Streets

It's the little things—like spotting a dog, even if I'm not the biggest fan of them, or capturing the wheelie crew riding through the city's chaos. The unpredictability of the streets makes me feel like I'm part of a drama, a play orchestrated by

something larger than myself. Every fleeting moment becomes worth capturing, worth elevating into something more.

The Philosophy of Letting Go

And yet, there's a philosophy behind this approach, too. Street photography teaches me that there's no excuse not to be present. It's easy to get caught up in the hunt for the perfect shot, to become obsessed with finding something spectacular. But the real magic comes when I let go, when I allow life to unfold in front of me. The slower I walk, the more I see. The more I see, the more I photograph. It's about slowing down and letting go of everything I think I know.

Rethinking the Chosen Ones

I think about the street preacher I encounter sometimes. He's got a message that's all fire and brimstone, talking about how everyone's going to hell. His take on the gospel is rigid, focused on a literal reading of the text. He often mentions Revelation, the 144,000 chosen ones, and the apocalyptic visions of the end times. But I think that interpretation can lead to a narrow worldview, one that misses the deeper, more metaphorical meanings that might be found in scripture.

A Metaphor for Inner Transformation

If you look at Revelation through a metaphorical lens, it's not just a story of division and destruction. It's a story about transformation, about the struggles between light and darkness that play out inside each of us. Maybe the "chosen ones" aren't a fixed group, but a symbol of the potential for each person to find their own path to spiritual awakening.

Finding Paradise in the Present

I believe the kingdom of heaven isn't just some distant paradise reserved for a select few. It's within us, in our hearts, in the very way we live and breathe. It's in the feeling of sunlight on a cold day, in the rhythm of muscles moving as you walk, in the sense of being completely present. It's not about waiting for the afterlife—it's about finding moments of transcendence right here, right now.

The Sensation of Bliss

Maybe this sounds a bit esoteric, but there's a physical aspect to it, too. When you're fully present in the moment, when you're not distracted by the past or the future, you can achieve a sense of bliss that feels like paradise. It's something that happens through movement, through change, through accepting the flux of life. And yes, life has its end, its finality. Our bodies will age, break, and fade. But while we're here, on this earth, in this life, there's a chance to find that sense of paradise within.

Achieving Paradise on Earth

So, don't yearn for what's beyond. Don't spend your time preaching damnation to others. Find your own paradise right here, within your own experience, and share that with the world. Let each photo, each moment, be a testament to the beauty of life. Shoot from the heart.