

Augment Your Reality

One idea I've been thinking about a lot recently is this idea of augmenting your reality. Maybe when you think of augmented reality, you think of Apple Vision Pro or those weird Ray-Ban glasses, where you can have pop-ups display in front of your face in a digital interface. However, I like to think about how to use the power of creation to make my life larger.

*The etymology of the word augment traces back to the Latin root **augere**, meaning "to increase, to grow, or to enlarge."*

I find that through the creation of photographs, videos, or even text-based writing on a blog, it makes my life more grand, and nothing makes me smile more than seeing the number of photos that I make increase every single day.

Why?

I think we should seek to increase our lives, almost like installing an expansion pack or downloadable content in a new game. You know when you finish a main story in a game, and then you have to go out and find the expansion packs and download them and install them just so you can play a little bit more? What if we apply this philosophy to our lives—to exploration, creation, and the expansion of ideas through knowledge, seeking wisdom, or even meditation?

Transcend

So yesterday, when I was in the greenhouse pruning some plants, I was very still for a moment, very calm, in a meditative state of being. I think in this fast-paced life, in the modern world, we don't take the time to simply be, to remain still, to actually be stagnant. I find that through stagnation, you find contemplation. Through contemplation, maybe this is where true transcendence occurs?

*The word transcendence originates from the Latin root **transcendere**, which means “to climb over” or “to surpass.”*

For instance, as I was pruning the plants, looking very closely at them—the intricacies, the veins that carry water to the roots, the way the flowers bloom—from a bird's-eye view, it felt godlike... I felt like I was looking at a new world, from this perspective, close to life itself. To me, spending time in solitude, in nature, in contemplation—through stillness—we become closer to God by recognizing we are bound by gravity, with our feet planted on the ground, similar to the way a tree’s roots grow deep under the earth’s soil.

What You See Is What You Feel

Perhaps our photographs are merely a reflection of our emotional state of being, rather than an actual depiction of what reality is, or what we saw in a visual sense. I believe that the visual photograph enlarges our lives, emphasizing our inner soul, our feelings about life as a whole. To me, photography is the ultimate way to augment your reality, as it expands your visual palette by engaging in the physical world and having sensory experiences at the core of every fleeting moment. While the sensual and visual perception allows us to experience everyday life on one dimension, I believe through the act of making an image of something, it transcends this simple notion of something sensual or visual to an extremely empowering act of creation, almost like you’re creating a new world altogether. When I am making an image of something, I’m not just affirming life or viewing something beautiful; I’m deciding to make a new world, to make my world larger than life itself.

How to Find Motivation?

The words passion, desire, and motives all come from the Latin word:

Movere - to move

Simple: move your two legs.

What Am I Most Passionate About in Life?

Of course, I'm passionate about photography, but at the core of my exploration of the medium, I am most excited by the physical act of walking. Walking, to me, is pure bliss. The dopamine rush of making an image, the adrenaline of experiencing something new, the hormones firing, and testosterone rising as I travel across the great world through moving my two legs pleases me on a physiological level as much as it does metaphorically through the act of making images or art. I find that walking is my number one passion in life. Simply being in movement is where I thrive as an artist, as a human, as an individual.

Holidays Don't Feel the Same?

I was speaking to somebody recently, and they were talking about how the holidays don't feel the same anymore. I asked them, why?

He actually had an interesting perspective and started to speak about how back in his day, in the '70s, everybody would be out shopping and smiling and having a good time during the holidays in Brooklyn. There was a sense of community, and neighbors respected each other's property and would be generous to each other. Now, when you go to a CVS to simply buy toothpaste, you have to click a button to alert a worker to come by with a key to unlock the glass for you to buy this very simple product. Nowadays, it's hard to trust anyone, and people find any excuse necessary to go out there and just rob stuff from stores. It's not even safe in the suburbs anymore, as I've heard countless stories recently from friends that live in very nice neighborhoods in Philadelphia that experienced carjackings and burglaries.

Fear and Division

The problem with the news is that it mostly promotes fear. Another strange trend is towards identity politics. I find it odd that there's so much discussion about the color of one's skin and how it makes them different from other people. To me, this is

extremely elementary, almost like we're evolving backward as a society. I don't think anybody actually cares what color your skin is.

I remember when I was a kid, I would visit my grandmother's house in North Philly. I was always the only Caucasian kid on the block. I never considered the color of the skin of the kids I would play football with in the street. My brother and I would just go knock on the neighbor's door, grab a football, and play. We'd head to the poppy store, get some water, ice, and just hang out at the block party. In my experience, children don't think about the color of their skin. Children are innocent. What I realize is, after all my travels throughout the world, we are all more similar than dissimilar. The more that we focus on what makes us different from one another, the more divided we will be. Don't let this new wave of identity politics brainwash you.

TikTok and Instagram

Is it just me, or have you noticed that Instagram and TikTok and all of this social media stuff turned into some weird place for people to sell their bodies? I remember when I used Instagram, I had to constantly filter out certain posts that would pop up, as it was all so exploitative and overly sexual. I think China is really clever with TikTok, and the way that I see it is, the corporation ByteDance, who owns it, was responsible for rotting the brains and souls of the American youth.

***Corpus:** The Latin root **corpus** means "body." It is the basis for many related words that pertain to physical or metaphorical bodies, such as "corporeal" (pertaining to the body) and "corpse" (a dead body).*

Not only does this dead body, or corporation, rot the brains of the people who use this social media platform by becoming addicted to short-term pleasure and dopamine seeking, but they are also promoting them to sell their bodies through hyper-sexualization. Just think about Instagram and the effect this must have on people's self-esteem. If somebody posts a photo, let's say, a young woman, and it's of their face, maybe it gets 100 likes. However, when they post a photo of their body, it might get 1,000 likes. I really don't care what people do with their bodies or how they want to live their lives on a social level. I'm just trying to make a point about how these corporations advocate for behavior patterns. I think it's very

unethical in my opinion and something to be skeptical of. At this point, I really don't trust the opinions of people who use social media like Instagram or TikTok, similar to how I no longer trust the opinions of people who drink alcohol, Coca-Cola, or smoke cigarettes.

Subtraction Is Augmentation

These corporations make their profit through advertisements that are typically directly tied to people's self-esteem. By adding more to your life, purchasing more goods, going to Coachella, buying the latest product, trying the fancy clothes, you may think that this augments your reality and makes it larger. But what if I would tell you it is the exact opposite, and that subtracting more from your life will make your life larger? Don't let the economy be fueled by your emotions and whims. Take control of your life by subtracting and augmenting your world through creation instead of consumption.

Don't Be a Monkey

It feels like society just wants you to be a weak, docile sheep, over and over again. The way that they bombard you with all of this hyper-sexualized content is alarming, no? This is part of the reason why I decided to delete my Instagram two years ago. I just couldn't stand opening the app and seeing women's butts, breasts, and all this weird stuff. This is why I completely disconnect from the Internet generally, besides using ChatGPT, because it's all pretty devious and mostly bad for your mind, body, and spirit. I mean, at the end of the day, what this is causing is a mass amount of people to become addicted to pornography and sexual gratification through masturbation. Is masturbation unethical? No. Is pornography unethical? Maybe. However, I've decided to stop being a monkey and quit porn over two years ago now. It's kind of embarrassing, considering I'm 28, and got over watching porn only around 25, but this is the new normal for young men. I can almost 100% guarantee you that 99% of people are watching it. It's so normalized now that it's kind of obvious. However, two years of not touching the worm, not using the tube, the P, has given me superpowers. I found that there's this trend towards no fap, and I find it kind of amusing. But in all honesty, I'm two years in and can highly recommend you start today. Just quit it all, allow your natural biology to do the

work when you're sleeping, and harness your testosterone, your power, your seed, through acts of creation instead. I feel like that's what the essence of sperm is anyway—it's the ultimate God-like physiological energy that exists in the universe. It's like our ultimate way as men to channel power into creation.

Imperfection Is Perfection

I think there's a higher reason why we are the way that we are. I think that there's something divine within us and within the way that we have been created in God's image. You might think you're ugly because your waist size is a certain way, or your butt is small, or your lips are weird, and you think you need to augment your reality—your body, your muscles—through steroids, Botox, and all these strange butt lifts or whatever. However, we're all imperfect beings, perfectly created, divinely orchestrated by something higher than ourselves. I think it's important to just love yourself generally, especially in a world of comparison that tries to make you feel less than.

For instance, I have a receding hairline, and I was insecure about it a couple of years ago, wondering why it's even happening. But honestly, it's probably just within my genetic makeup, something out of my control, and that's totally normal and fine. The problem is, advertisements on the Internet would constantly bombard me to take all these medications, strange supplements, and things to do with hair that really pissed me off. Again, these advertisements are strangely personal and toxic, feeding on the emotion, fear, and pain of an individual user.

The US Dollar Is Toxic

SEPTA, Philadelphia's public transportation system, recently increased the wages of their workers, which in turn increased the fare price of each individual ride. This is not good and a telltale sign to me that the system is broken. Our money is depreciating in value over time. Depreciation of the value of our dollar leads to an inflated economy. With the number of our dollars increasing each and every year, our debt grows larger and larger. This, to me, is where I realize that augmentation doesn't need to increase in size itself. To augment the economy, we actually need a scarce, fixed supply of money. Scarcity makes the dollar, the money, the system

itself thrive and grow larger. I find that by simply realizing the money we use is poison, similar to drinking sick, poopy water from a sewer, you kind of want to opt out of this broken monetary technology. Recently, Bitcoin hit \$100,000 per coin. This is astonishing to me, considering how early we are in the protocol. Every four years there will be a halving, and this event will increase the scarcity of Bitcoin. We are only at level four in the halving cycle, and this, to me, is so inspiring and makes me optimistic for the future of increased wealth generation throughout the entire world.

One thing I can't help but notice about the US dollar is the power it holds in foreign nations like Africa or even China. Just think about the wages the workers make in the Congo for the exploitative child labor of mining for cobalt, an essential mineral needed to create the components for an iPhone. The weight that this carries towards China, where they make the iPhone in Foxconn factories, where they have suicide nets out of their windows because the workers are treated like dogs. The US dollar is responsible for the exploitation of millions, if not billions, of people, and the deaths of so many innocent lives at war. Doesn't that piss you off?

Lust and Rage

While I recognize lust and rage are normal parts of the human experience, I believe it is most wise for us to control them. Actually, I believe that lust and rage go hand in hand. I believe that through abstinence, a little bit of sexual frustration, and a little bit of rage, you will see an increase in the rate at which you perform every single day, in every little task, from waking up in the morning to going to sleep at night. Honestly, I think that this is how men were designed to be. We were designed to channel this energy into productivity, creativity, and action. But unfortunately, it seems like society wants to suppress you, to keep you a docile monkey, touching your worm in a virtual reality headset after you come home from the office and crank those numbers!

So what if we all collectively and consciously decided to unplug, metaphorically from the system, this matrix, and augment our reality in a new way? What if the answer was extremely simple, and all we had to do was go to the temple of the central bank, put our hands underneath the table of the money lenders, and flip it

upside down? What if then we took our minds and our bodies, and we opted to move them away from this system, physically and digitally, through adopting a new technology called Bitcoin? Well, I think that would be a better world.