

Why I Switched to Black and White Street Photography

What's poppin', people? It's Dante. Today, I want to talk about **why black and white street photography?** Why am I personally switching from color to black and white? Over the past two years, I've been shooting exclusively in black and white, and it's completely reshaping the way I think about photography.

Destroying to Rebuild

One of the main reasons I made this switch is because, honestly, **I know too much about photography.** I've spent so much time working in the traditional documentary approach—traveling, getting closer and closer to life through my camera—and I hit a wall. I needed to relearn and rebuild again.

So, in order to keep going, I **destroyed my photography to rebuild it.** I'm essentially going back to day one as a photographer, and this is allowing infinite potential.

"In order to change, one must embrace strife, one must overcome challenges."

Photography became too easy for me. By stripping away color, I'm challenging myself. **By setting creative constraints, I'm becoming more creative.**

The Fastest Workflow Humanly Possible

Photography is a slow process. Even with digital files, you import RAW, process, back up, and waste hard drive space. **I don't want to do that anymore.**

Now, I'm working at the fastest pace possible:

- **Camera:** Ricoh GR III
- **Settings:** High contrast black and white, cranked to the max
- **File Type:** Small JPEG (~4MB)

All the contrast, shadows, and highlights are boosted to the max. No post-processing. The image comes straight out of the camera ready to go.

"I'm spending less time behind the computer and more time making new photos."

I'm using an **iPad Pro** to cull and organize my images. Everything is streamlined, allowing me to focus on **photographing more and worrying less about the technical bullshit.**

How I Shoot

I keep it **simple.**

- **Camera Mode:** Program or Aperture Priority
- **Focus:** Snap focus or autofocus
- **Technique:** Pretend to shoot something else, then capture the moment

For example, at a butcher shop, I wanted to photograph a man but didn't want to ask for permission. I acted like I was shooting something above him, then panned the camera down to capture the shot. **Done. No fuss.**

Moving Beyond Documentary

I've built a solid body of work in full color, documenting life all over the world. But now, I have an itch to **push the boundaries**.

By embracing creative constraints, I'm shifting away from pure documentation and into abstraction. Photography isn't just about capturing reality—it's about *interpreting* it.

"Photography is not necessarily a photograph of what reality is, but what reality could be."

By working in high-contrast black and white, **reality manifests in a multifaceted way**. Every frame becomes elevated from the mundane to something extraordinary.

The Aesthetic of Black and White

Black and white photography allows me to **strip everything down to the essence**:

- **Light**
- **Shadow**
- **Form**

I expose for the highlights, **crushing the shadows completely**—if it's not important, it gets eliminated.

"The aesthetics of black and white go beyond beauty. By crushing the shadows and exposing for the highlights, I emphasize only the important details."

More Potential, Less Restriction

When I shot in color, I **limited myself** to golden hour—waiting for sunrise or sunset. Now? I can shoot any time, in any light:

- **Cloudy days?** No problem.
- **Rainy days?** Perfect.
- **Harsh midday light?** Even better.

Color photography relies on **strong light** to make the image work. With black and white, **I no longer have to wait.**

"Black and white unlocks more potential. It feels like I can shoot at any time of day without limits."

Returning to the Basics

By removing color, I'm returning to **light, shadow, and form**—day one of photography. **I'm unlearning everything I know.**

- **From documentary to abstraction**
- **From complexity to simplicity**
- **From knowing everything to knowing nothing**

"I'm looking for a grand challenge—to push the boundaries and create a new visual language."

Conclusion

Switching to black and white has:

- **Simplified my workflow**
- **Brought more joy to my photography**
- **Pushed me creatively**

"By giving myself these creative constraints, I'm becoming more creative."

And if you're curious about this approach, **check out my website**. I have a post on my **Start Here** page that walks through my entire workflow, camera settings, and process.

If you shoot with a Ricoh, try this out. **See what you can make.**

That's it for today. **Thanks for reading, and I'll see you in the next one.**

Peace.