

Why Play Is the Secret to Great Street Photography

What's poppin, people? It's Dante.

Getting my morning started here in the **Centennial Arboretum**, right in the heart of Philadelphia.

Practice Photography Like It's Day One

Today I'm thinking about the **philosophy of play**—what it means to me as an artist, photographer, street photographer... whatever you want to call it.

"Photography is practice. Every day is day one. Return to being an amateur."

Treat each morning like a **miniature birthday**—you've just been born again.
Treat each night like a **miniature death**—assume you may not wake up.

This mindset fuels gratitude.

It gives you that *exuberance for life* just from walking outside, feeling the air, seeing the trees, hearing the drizzle.

Everything becomes novel again.

Everything becomes *play*.

Burnout Comes from Forgetting to Play

The longer you shoot, the easier it is to think:

- "I've seen it all."

- “I’ve done it all.”
- “There’s nothing left to photograph.”

But that’s false.

“The ultimate aim of street photography is to uplift the ordinary to an extraordinary height.”

To do that? You have to return to being a **child**.

The Childlike Artist

Children are fearless. They’re *curious*.

I remember as a kid in the Wissahickon:

- Climbing trees to the canopy
- Building teepees and spears
- Pretending to be a hero, exploring the forest

That’s what we need to channel.

“Float through chaos on a featherbed, and put order to that chaos by embracing the unknown openly.”

Physical Play = Visual Play

Photography is **physical**.

- Drop low like a child

- Use macro mode
- Shoot from below, shoot from above
- Photograph details: dew drops, leaf veins, stone textures

Children explore because everything is new.
Be that again.

"Increase your curiosity. Embrace the small things. Affirm life through playful photography."

Style = Vision

Photographic style isn't:

- Black and white
- Color
- Subject matter

Style is vision.

"It's what you include—and what you exclude—that reveals your soul."

So photograph with curiosity.
Let your soul guide you.
Make your photography a **visual diary**, not a portfolio.

The Art of Wandering

When I walk the park, I see kids playing.

- Throwing rocks
- Picking mushrooms
- Running with sticks

They don't need fancy tools or plans.
They *tinker, explore, break, build*.

That's photography too.

"Treat the world like a canvas. Tinker like a child. Photograph like a wanderer."

A Moment with Goethe

Right now I'm looking at a sculpture of **Goethe**.

I drop low.
I isolate him with leaves in the background.
I look at him in **wonder** and **awe**.

That's play.

That's art.

Detach from Results

"Don't be hardened by what you've seen. Don't chase what a photo should be."

Detach from the result.

Ask *why*.

Affirm life.

Over time, your **vision** and your **soul** will reveal themselves in your photographs.

Final Thought: Return to Play

- Be curious.
- Be fearless.
- Be present.
- Be a child.

"Photography isn't about proving anything. It's about playing—every day."

Hope something I said today inspired you to go out there and **practice your photography**.

Peace.