

The Ultimate Ricoh GR Street Photography Guide

Settings, Techniques, & The Snapshot Philosophy

By Dante Sisofo



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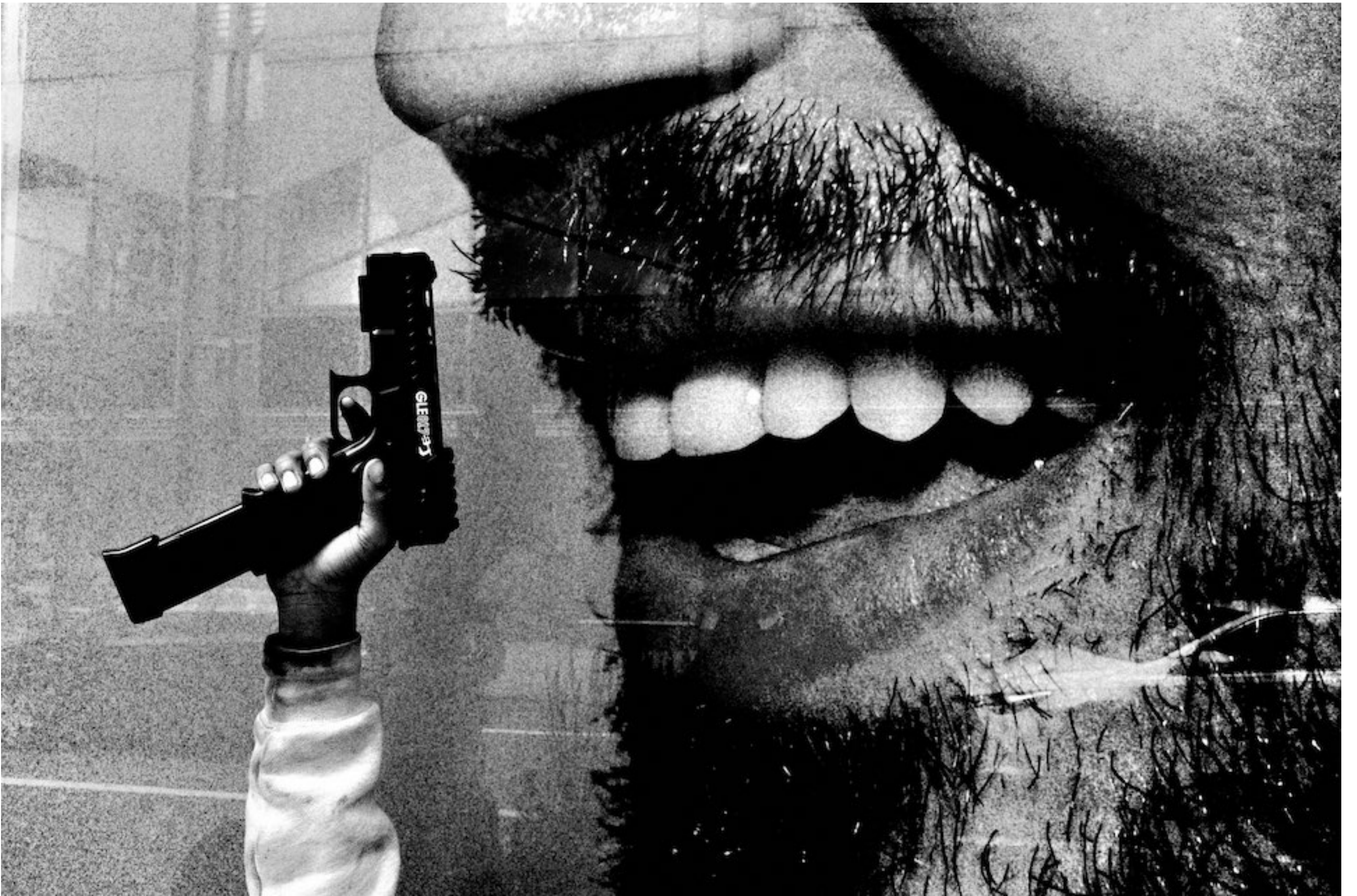
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[Watch the Full 1-Hour Ricoh GR Street Photography Masterclass](#)



Philadelphia, 2016 - Shot on Ricoh GRII

Introduction



Philadelphia, 2023 - Shot on Ricoh GRIII

This is the guide I wish I had back in 2015 when I first picked up the Ricoh GR. I've walked through so many cities with this camera. It's never left my pocket. I've made all the mistakes. I've tested every setting. I've stripped everything down to the essentials.

This guide is for anyone who wants to move fast, shoot with instinct, and not overthink.

If you're tired of carrying too much gear, tired of editing forever, or just want to fall back in love with walking and seeing again — this is for you.

Everything here is based on how I actually shoot. My settings, my workflow, the techniques I use on the street. No fluff. Just what works.

Why Ricoh?

The number one reason why I choose Ricoh is because I can simply live my everyday life and bring the camera along for the ride. Is that not the ultimate joy, and the simplest reason to choose a camera? It's the only camera out there that doesn't get in the way of living in the moment and always be ready to make your next photo.

The goal of street photography is simple: **produce more photos.**

With a fixed-lens camera that fits in your front right pocket at all times, there's no more decision fatigue—no wondering what lens to bring, no excuse not to shoot. The Ricoh eliminates barriers. It's always with you. And that's how you get better. By showing up, over and over again.



Rome, 2023 - Shot on Ricoh GRIII

The Philosophy



Ocean City, 2024 - Shot on Ricoh GRIIIx

The Ricoh GR is the closest thing to not having a camera. It's discreet. It's pure. It lets you walk freely. You don't have to think — you just shoot. That's the beauty of it.

I'm not walking around with a giant lens trying to prove I'm a photographer. I'm just out living. And the camera comes with me. That's how it should be. Most of my best shots didn't come from planning. They came from *presence*.

I follow the light. That's it. I orient my body toward the sun and walk. Sometimes I let the shadows guide me. Sometimes I stop for no reason. I trust my curiosity. And when the moment appears — a gesture, a laugh, a reflection — I press the shutter once. I don't hesitate. That's what the GR allows. It's fast. It's honest. It doesn't get in the way.

The Simplest Workflow Possible

I don't shoot RAW. I don't process photos. I use P mode. Highlight-weighted metering. Snap focus. That's it. I want to be done the moment I take the photo. Straight from camera. My whole workflow is built around moving fast. Making the photo. Publishing. Walking away.

The GR taught me that you don't need much. It taught me to simplify everything. To live minimally. You don't need ten lenses or a giant backpack. You need instinct. You need rhythm. You need to be in the world.

This isn't about creating a perfect photo. It's about witnessing life as it is. Raw, imperfect, beautiful. That's why I carry the GR with me everywhere. I don't go out to "make photographs." I just live. And if I see something, I shoot. It's a visual diary of my day.

The GR changed the way I see the world. It slowed me down. It stripped everything away. And in that silence, in that light, I started to see again.



Philadelphia, 2023 - Shot on Ricoh GRIII

My Camera Settings

Mode: P Mode or Aperture Priority (f/8)

Focus: Snap Focus at 2 meters

ISO: Auto

Shutter Speed Minimum: 1/1500s

Metering: Highlight-Weighted

File Type: Small JPEG (approx. 4MB)

P Mode is for Professionals

I shoot JPEG only. Av mode. Highlight-weighted metering. Snap focus at 2 meters. That's it.

I've tested every setting on this camera over the years, and this setup is what works best for how I move. I don't want to think when I'm out on the street. I want to respond—fast, fluid, clean.



My JPEG Recipe



Image Quality

Format: JPEG only

Size: Small (3360x2240px)

Aspect Ratio: 3:2

Image Control: High Contrast B&W

High/Low Key: -2

Contrast: +4

Highlight Contrast: -4

Shadow Contrast: 0

Sharpness: +4

Clarity: +4

Shading: +4

Grain Effect: 3

Exposure Settings

Mode: Aperture Priority (Av)

GR III: f/8

GR IIIx: f/9

ISO: Auto (Min: 400, Max: 6400)

Minimum Shutter Speed: 1/500

Metering Mode: Highlight-weighted

ND Filter: Auto

Exposure Compensation: Use rear adjustment lever
(Right = overexpose, Left = underexpose)

Av mode lets me control the aperture while the camera adjusts the shutter speed within my defined limits. This keeps my shots sharp and properly exposed in dynamic lighting conditions.



Focus Settings



No Distractions

Focus Settings

- **Focus Mode:** Snap Focus
- **Snap Distance:** 2 meters
- **Full Press Snap:** Off
- **Face Detection:** Off
- **AF Assist Light:** Off

With f/8 and 2m snap, everything's in focus. Point and shoot. It's incredible. No green lights. No distractions.

Custom Button Layout

Adjustment Lever:

- **Press:** Adjust Snap Focus Distance
- **Right/Left:** Exposure compensation

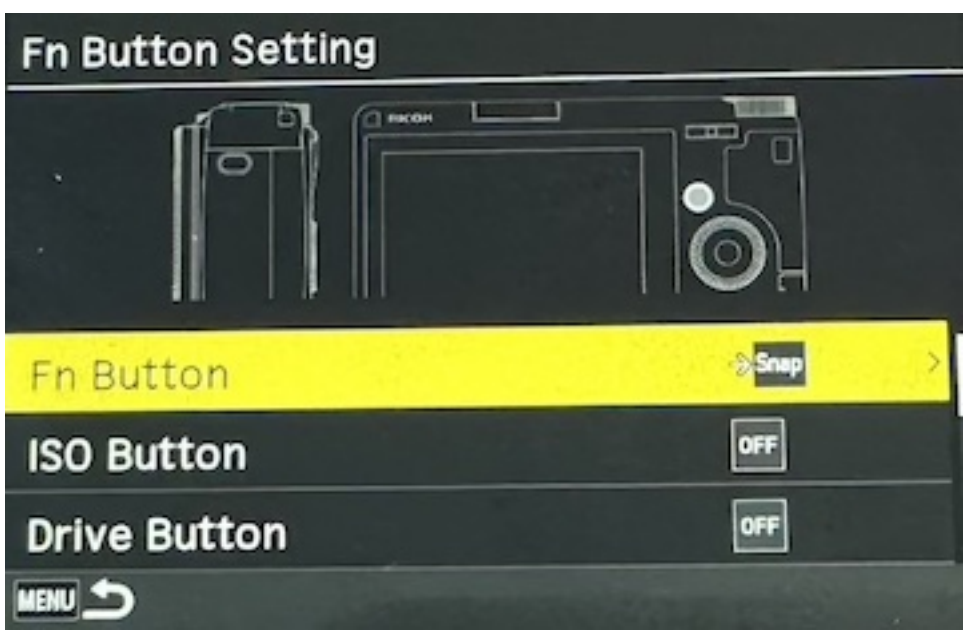
Fn Button: Toggle between Snap Focus and Single Point AF

D-Pad:

- **Top, Left, Right:** Off
- **Bottom:** Auto White Balance (default)

Video/WiFi:

- Crop Mode



LCD & Display Settings



Simplify

Touch Operation: Off

Touch AF: Off

Display Style: Minimal

Grid: 4x4

Playback Info Display: All off

Sound Effects: Shutter Sound Only

Volume: 0

The point of these settings is: set your camera once so you never have to think about it again. The camera should disappear. After you finished plugging in these settings, I now stripped your Ricoh down to the simplest solution to make photographs.

Essential Street Techniques

Tourist Technique

Act like you're photographing the architecture. Then lower the camera and shoot your subject casually.

- [Watch Video](#)

Look-Up Trick

Pretend to look up at a landmark — then pan down and shoot the actual moment. Works great in public plazas.

- [Watch Video](#)

Middle Finger Shutter

Use your middle finger on the shutter for flexible, loose compositions. Easily switch between horizontal/vertical.

- [Watch Video](#)

T-Rex Technique

Tuck your elbows. Hold the camera close. Shoot from the chest. It's so obvious it becomes invisible.

- [Watch Video](#)



Tourist Technique



Step 1: Pretend to Photograph the Background

Example: You're on Broad Street. Pretend you're fascinated by the buildings or the landscape. Point your camera at these elements as though they're your primary interest.



Step 2: Frame Candid Shots While "Touring"

While pretending to focus on the background, subtly shift your camera to include people in your frame. The beauty of this method is that it allows you to capture natural, unposed moments without raising suspicion.

The Look-Up Technique

A specific variation of the Tourist Technique is the Look-Up Technique. Here's how it works:

1. Point the camera upward. Pretend you're photographing something above you—like a tower, the sky, or interesting architecture.
2. Transition smoothly. After “finishing” your shot, bring the camera down and immediately shoot what's in front of you.

This seamless movement helps you stay unnoticed and lets you capture people naturally.

You look up, shoot above, and then look down to snap what's right in front of you.



Rome, 2023 - Shot on Ricoh GRIII

The Middle Finger Shutter

When it comes to street photography, the way you hold your camera can significantly impact your shooting style and the results you get. With the Ricoh GRIII, I've developed a technique that maximizes flexibility, speed, and discretion: using the middle finger to press the shutter.

Why Use the Middle Finger?

1. Increased Freedom of Movement

Holding the camera loosely with your middle finger on the shutter gives you more control over the camera's orientation.

- Quickly switch between horizontal and vertical compositions.
- Wave the camera into your shot for a fluid, almost cinematic style.

2. Faster Compositions

- With your middle finger on the shutter, you can quickly adjust angles without twisting your wrist unnaturally.
- This allows you to adapt to the scene in front of you, capturing moments as they happen without hesitation.

3. Discreet Shooting

- The Ricoh's compact size, paired with a wrist strap, makes it easy to blend into your environment.
- The middle finger grip keeps your hand relaxed, making your movements less noticeable to subjects.

How To Hold the Ricoh GRIII

1. Grip the Camera Loosely

- Rest the camera in your palm.
- Use the middle finger to press the shutter.

2. Leverage the Wrist Strap

- Secure the camera to your wrist with the Ricoh leather wrist strap.
- This adds stability while allowing you to tuck the camera away quickly when not in use.

3. Move Freely

- Extend your arm to capture overhead shots.
- Drop the camera to waist level for low-angle compositions.
- Transition seamlessly between angles without adjusting your grip.

Note: I don't always shoot with my middle finger, but it's extremely useful for certain situations and helps you flow into compositions more naturally by waving the camera like a wand.



The T-Rex Technique

The T-Rex technique is a playful yet effective method for street photography. It's all about how you carry your camera. Instead of holding it up to your eye or dangling it conspicuously, you adopt a low-profile stance that helps you blend in while getting up close to your subjects.

How to Execute the T-Rex Technique

1. Loosely Hold Your Camera:

- Keep the camera at chest level.
- Grip it lightly, as if your arms were those tiny T-Rex limbs.

2. Maintain a Casual Posture:

- Let your arms dangle naturally.
- Walk around as if you're not even thinking about taking photos.

3. Shoot with Subtlety:

- Look straight ahead, but stay aware of your surroundings through your peripheral vision.
- Use the camera to capture moments without drawing attention.



Bonus Tip: Crop Mode

The Ricoh GRIII's crop mode is a game changer for street photography. I recently put it to the test at the 9th Street Italian Market Festival here in Philadelphia, and it proved to be a powerful tool, helping me capture moments I might have missed otherwise.

Quick Access with the Wi-Fi Button

To make the crop mode as accessible as possible, I assigned it to the Wi-Fi button on the side of the camera. This setup allows me to easily toggle between the standard 28mm and the 50mm crop with a single button press. Being able to switch back and forth instantly lets me adapt quickly to changing scenes, especially in a dynamic environment like the Italian Market Festival.



The Versatility of 50mm Crop

Using the 50mm crop mode opened up creative possibilities during the festival. I captured two of my favorite photos of the day this way, each benefiting from the closer, more intimate framing that 50mm offers.



- **The Woman in the Window:** This shot became one of my favorites. Framed in the window, the woman encapsulates the event's atmosphere and location on 9th Street. With the crop mode, I could zero in on her within the context of the bustling street around her, creating a more intimate storytelling moment.



- **The Greasy Pole Contest:** During the festival, teams compete to climb a greasy pole to grab prizes like cheeses or sausage at the top. It's an exhilarating scene to capture. I positioned myself right by the fence, waiting about 30 minutes before the contest started, to ensure I'd have a clear view looking up toward the pole. The 50mm crop was perfect here, letting me get close enough to emphasize the climber as he reached for the prize, while also capturing the intense energy of the crowd.
-

Exposure & Metering Tricks

With Highlight-Weighted Metering, subjects in shadow can become underexposed. Here's how I adjust:

1. Point the camera at a shadowed area.
2. Half-press shutter to lock exposure.
3. Reframe and shoot.



You can also use the rear **adjustment lever** to underexpose by a stop on the fly.

- [Watch Full Video](#)

Highlight-Weighted Metering

The highlight-weighted metering on the Ricoh GRIII is the easiest and most aesthetically beautiful way to set up the camera for street photography.



Highlight-weighted metering on the Ricoh GRIII allows you to focus exposure on the brightest areas in your frame, creating a beautiful, high-contrast aesthetic that makes highlights pop while shadows naturally deepen. This setup is ideal for capturing the dramatic, sublime look that works well in street photography, where light and shadow play a crucial role.

While other options like multi-segment metering are available, they can sometimes lead to less predictable exposure adjustments. With highlight-weighted metering, you get a more consistent and visually pleasing result that emphasizes the highlights while leaving the darker parts in shadow.

Exposure Tip



In certain situations, the camera may overemphasize the highlights, resulting in darker shadows than desired. This is where exposure compensation and exposure lock techniques can come in handy:

1. Adjust Exposure Compensation

Use the exposure compensation dial on the camera to increase or decrease exposure as needed. This adjustment helps you manage how much light is in your frame without losing detail.

2. Lock Exposure by Half-Pressing

One useful trick with highlight-weighted metering is to lock the exposure on a specific area of your scene by half-pressing the shutter button.

How Snap Exposure Works

- Find an area in your frame that has the highlights you want to emphasize or the shadows you want to maintain.
- Half-press the shutter on that spot to lock in the exposure, then move to compose the shot as desired. This technique allows you to control where the camera meters, even in tricky lighting situations.

When you lock in exposure for the shadows, you can capture people perfectly exposed in the foreground, while the bright background takes on an aesthetic overexposure.



This technique allows you to quickly adjust exposure without relying on aperture, shutter speed, or fiddling with the exposure compensation lever. It's fast, efficient, and keeps you in the flow.

- [Watch Full Video](#)

Composition Breakdown #1



Rome: Light & Layers

Scene: The Colosseum at golden hour

I kept returning to this same street because I knew it had potential. Here’s how I built the frame:



Tip #1: Find a choke point.



Set your stage

Once you're there, you set the stage. Background first, then wait for the foreground to fall into place.

You don't always need to hunt. Sometimes you need to fish. You set your frame and wait for the subject to step into it. That's what I did:

- Set the Colosseum in the background
- Paid attention to light and shadow
- Waited for a subject to enter the frame
- Clicked the shutter

Composition Breakdown #2



Philadelphia: The Chinese New Year Celebration

Scene: Man smoking in the crowd

In my hometown, Philly, I hit the streets during Chinese New Year. I found a subject: a man smoking a cigarette. He wasn't facing me — so I waited.



Tip #2: Get close.



How I worked the scene:

- Raised the Ricoh above eye level
- Isolated him from the background clutter
- Waited for the moment he turned toward me
- Captured the gesture

Getting close and filling the frame in the foreground with a subject, with a gesture, with something visually impactful, is going to elevate a mundane moment to a new height. Proximity is power. Events give you that opportunity. Find festivals, parades, and bustling places for you to practice blending in the crowd and getting as close as possible.

Composition Breakdown #3



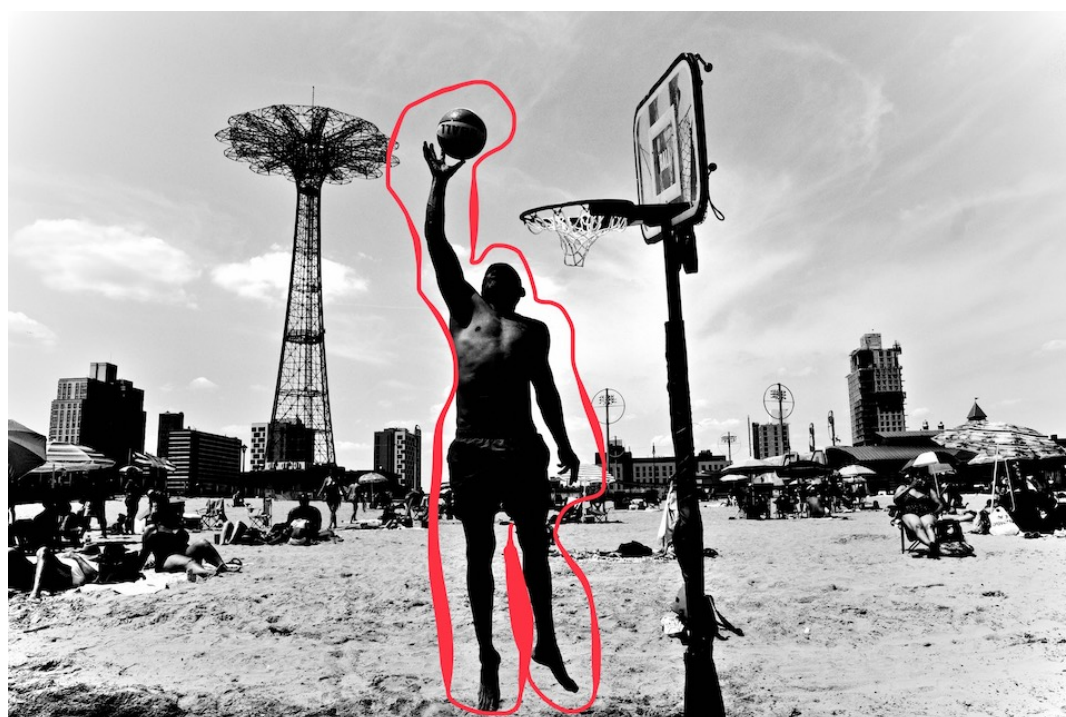
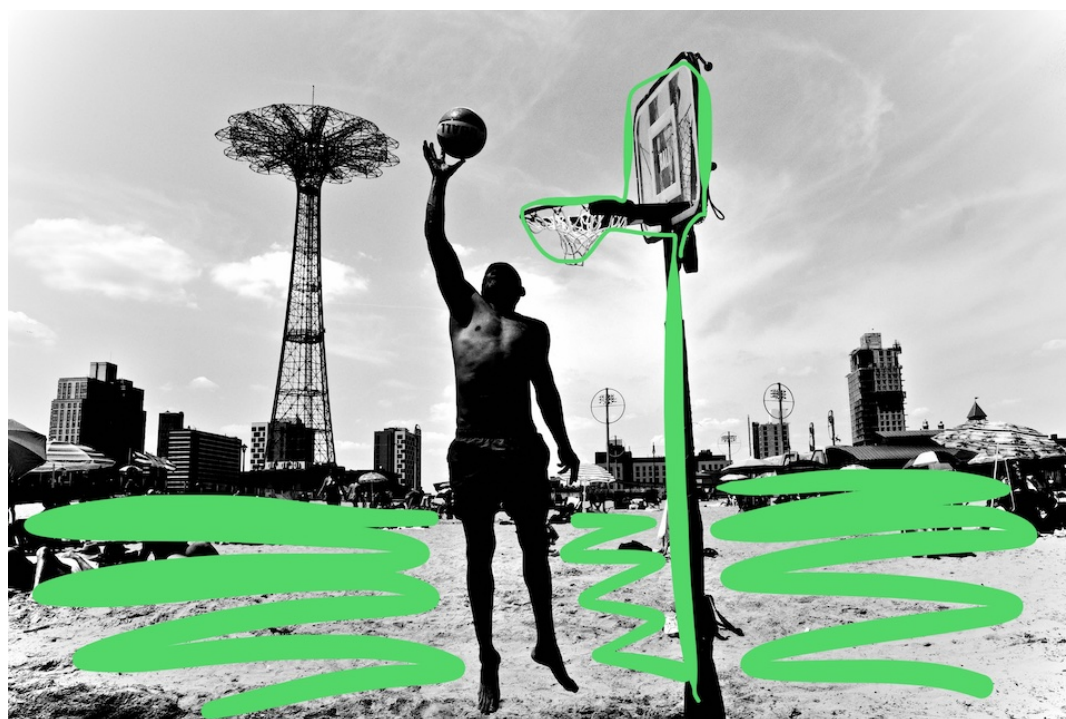
Coney Island: Basketball on the Beach

Scene: Slam dunk on the beach

First time seeing basketball on the beach. First time on Coney Island.



Tip #3: Treat photography like visual problem solving.



I treated the scene like a puzzle:

- **Background** – the amusement ride
- **Middle ground** – the basketball hoop and pole
- **Foreground** – the man jumping to dunk

I worked back to front. I simply positioned my physical body in relationship to the people dunking (subject) and the tower in the background. And by the time that man jumped in the middle of the frame, I was ready. Everything aligned.

- [Watch Behind the Scene Video](#)

Street Photography 101



Curiosity is the goal

The more that you walk, the more that you see. The more that you see, the more that you photograph. The more that you photograph, the more curious you become. The more curious you become, the more you go back out there to make more photographs.

If you want to improve your photography, tap into childlike curiosity. Don't overthink it. Just walk, look, and respond to what catches your eye. Kids don't need a reason to play—they just do. That's how you should shoot. Let go of the rules. Don't try to control the outcome. When you enter that playful flow state, photography becomes effortless. It's not about the perfect image—it's about joy, spontaneity, and being alive to the moment.

- [Watch My Video - Why Childlike Curiosity Makes You a Better Photographer](#)

Photography Isn't About Photography



The Frontlines of Life

I believe photography has nothing to do with photography. Photography has everything to do with how you engage with humanity out there in the open world, on the front lines of life.

To become a better street photographer, you must first fall in love with life. It's not just about the act of taking photos; it's about immersing yourself in the world, observing, and connecting with the human experience.

For instance, in the photo above from Coney Island, I was present at the scene when I pressed the shutter. I was dancing alongside the subjects in the frame, and the joy of the moment reflects back in the photograph.

- [Watch the behind the scenes video of how I made the photo dancing under the Coney Island boardwalk](#)

Composition is Physical



Shoot from your gut, not your eyes

The result of the composition derives through your intuition, through your gut, through where you position your body and press the shutter.

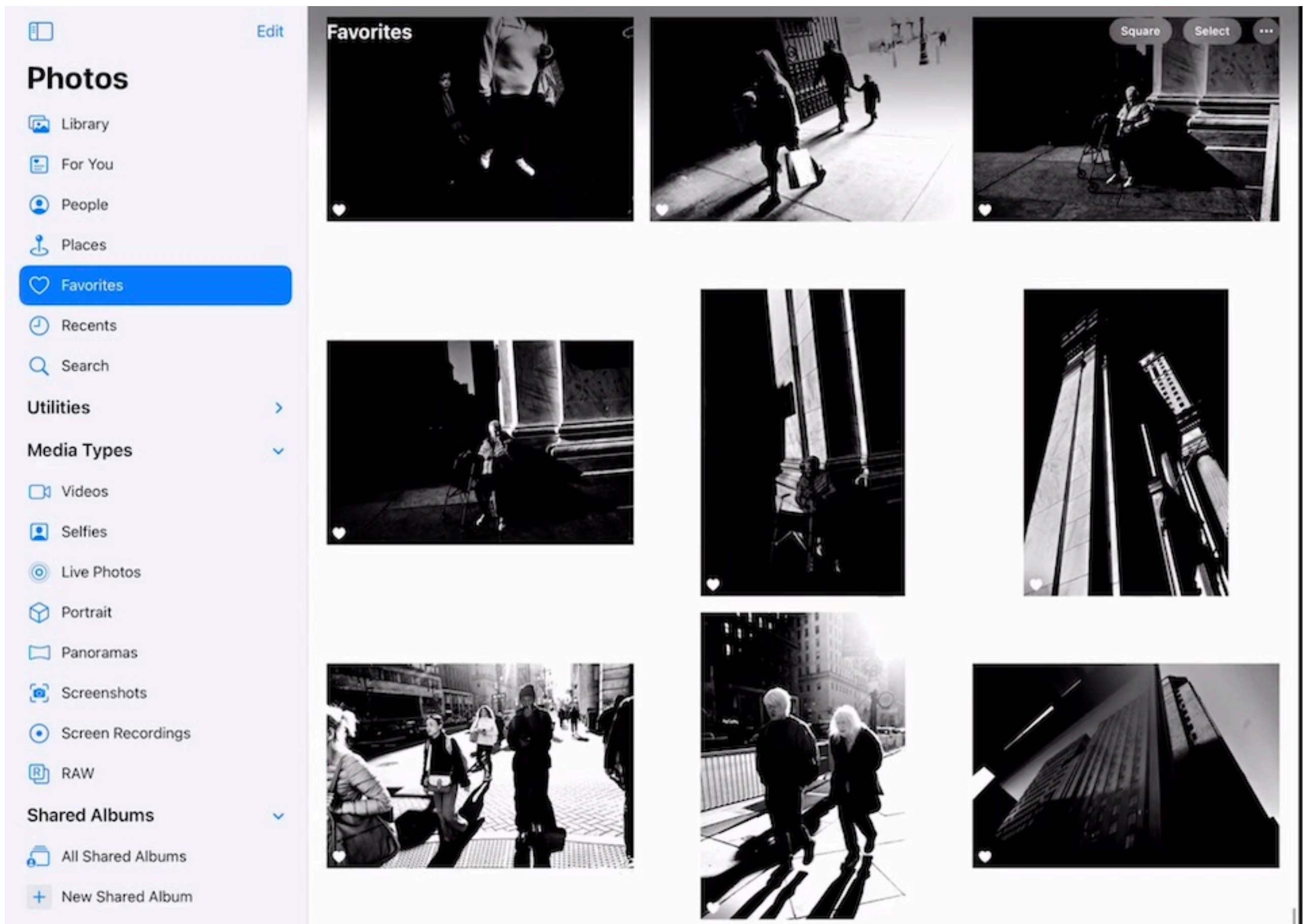
Composition isn't just a visual concept; it's a physical act. Your position, movement, and timing all contribute to the final image. Trust your instincts and let your body guide your framing.

At the end of the day, you are merely responsible for where you position your physical body in relationship to the subject and the background. As much as you see the world with your two eyes, the result of the photograph derives through movement and your gut instinct.

- [Watch my video - Composition is Intuitive](#)

Daily Workflow & Publishing

My workflow is all about speed and simplicity. From shooting small JPEG files to editing and backing things up, I've got you covered with the simplest solution possible.



iPad Pro Workflow

- 1. Use the [USB-C to SD Card Reader](#) to import photos directly into the built-in Photos app.
- 2. Create a folder for the date you made the images and store them there.
- 3. Review thumbnails in a 3×3 grid.
- 4. Select the keepers by hitting the heart-shaped favorite icon.
- 5. Drag the winners from the favorites folder into a final selection folder.
- 6. Upload the final selects to [Google Photos](#) for backup in the cloud.

Own Your Platform

Publish your work! The beauty of today's modern art world is that we no longer need to go through a gallery, curator, or a publisher. We become the full stack media empire for our own work.



Wordpress Workflow:

- 1. Create your domain (First name)(Last name).com using bluehost.com
- 2. Go to WordPress.org and get started.
- 3. Install the [Astra theme](https://www.astra-theme.com/).
- 4. If you want to host your own videos, install the [Jetpack plugin](https://jetpack.com/) and purchase [Videopress](https://www.videopress.com/).
- 5. Upload your photos and videos to the media library and start publishing!

Get off Instagram and own your platform. Create your own empire.

Make Slideshows

One way I have been enjoying sharing work is by creating slideshows.



- [Watch My Ocean City Slideshow](#)

Just Upload to YouTube

The great thing is, you can use our own website or [YouTube](#) as a way to store and archive your images. This way, your photos become easily accessible and people can share them via the link in the URL of the video. The problem with Instagram is the fact that the only people who can view the images are other people who already have Instagram accounts.

Collage and Experimentation



Remix Your Images!

Using apps like [Procreate](#), I've started making collages and remixing images by layering photos and playing with textures. It's a spontaneous, meditative process that keeps me engaged. [Watch this video on how I make collages.](#)



- [Watch this video on how I make collages.](#)

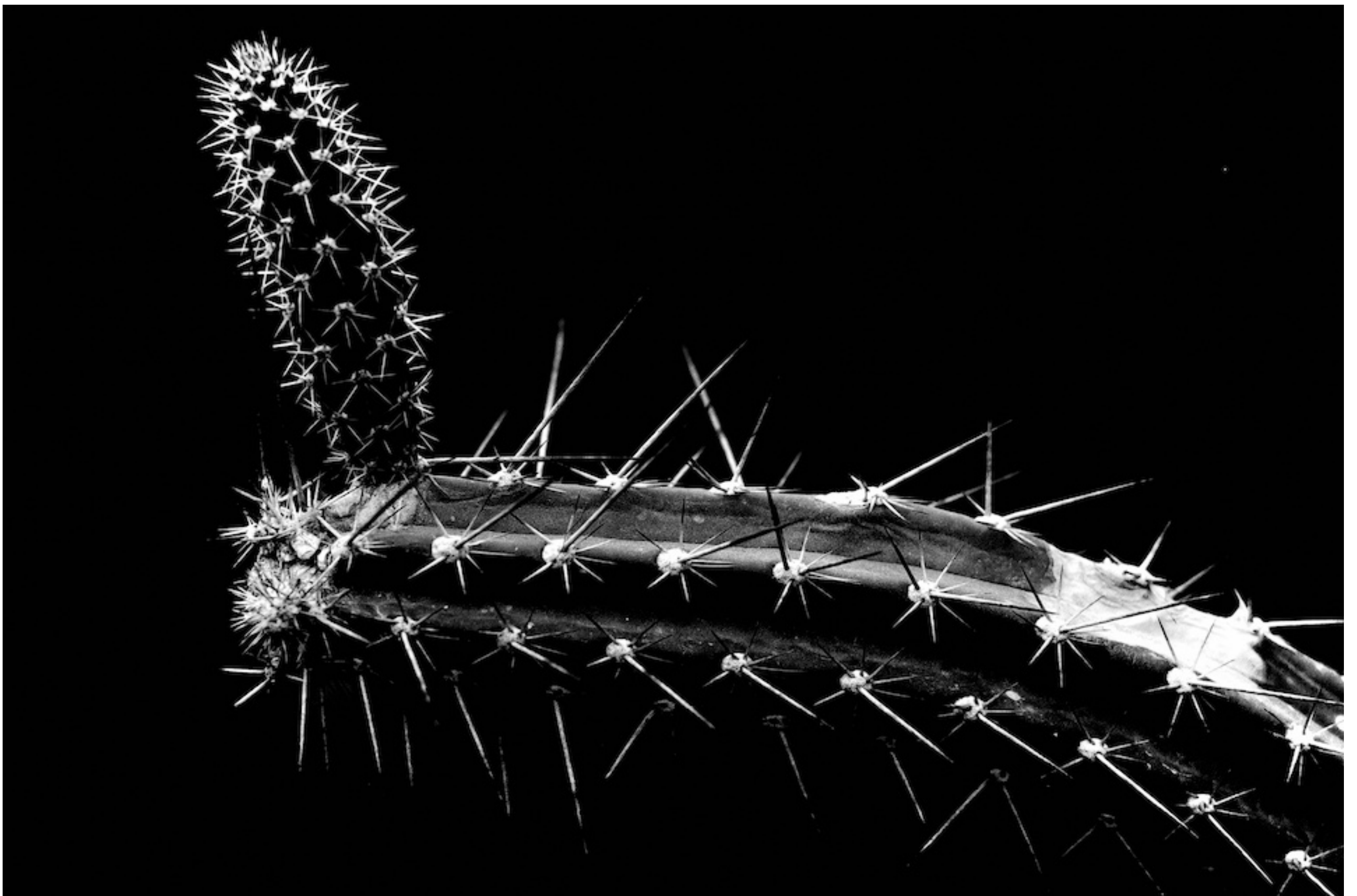
Self-Portraits and Details



Photograph Your Soul

I've embraced photographing myself and finding beauty in small details—from the patterns of birds to the ice forming on a river. It's all about celebrating the impermanence of life.

Use Macro Mode



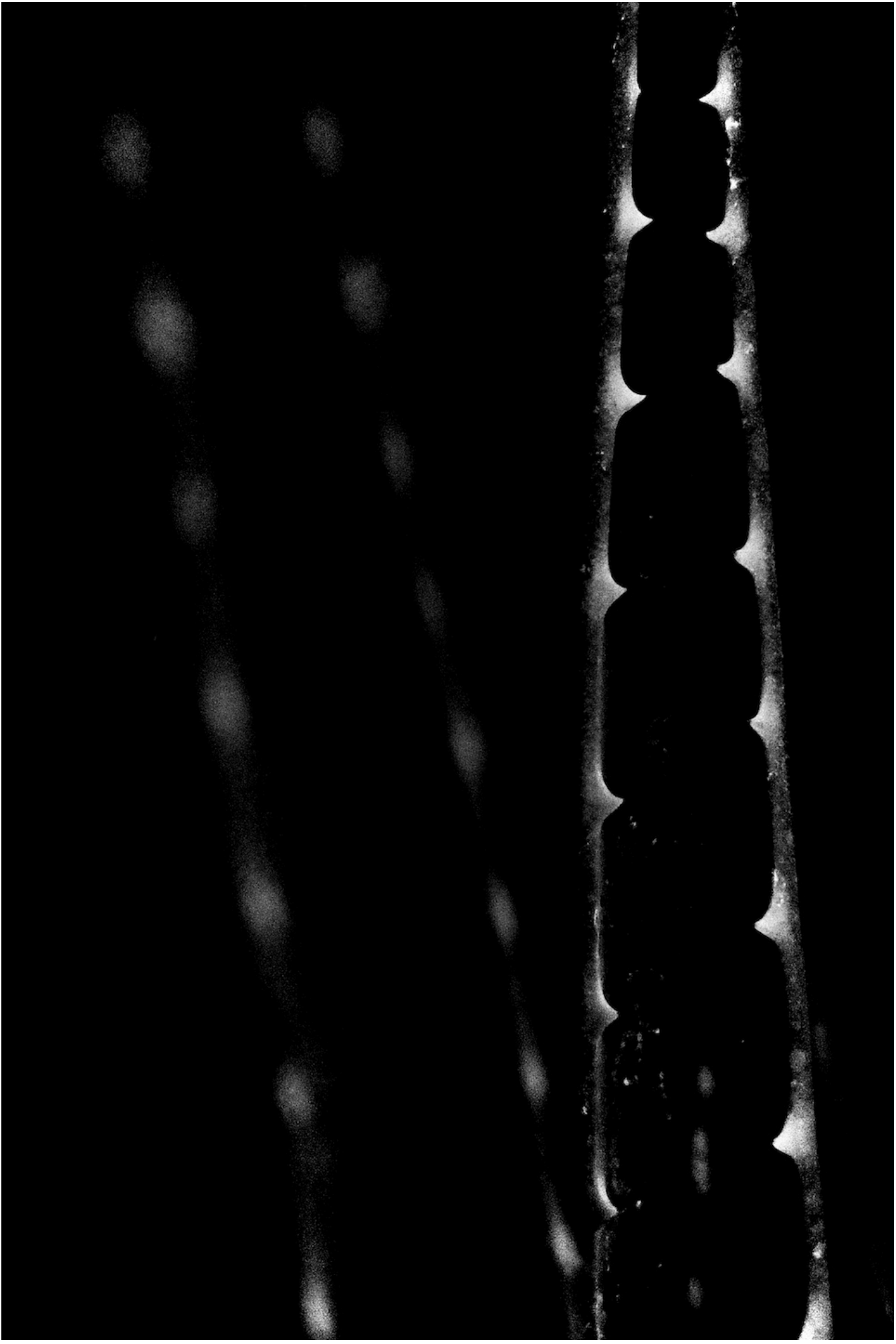
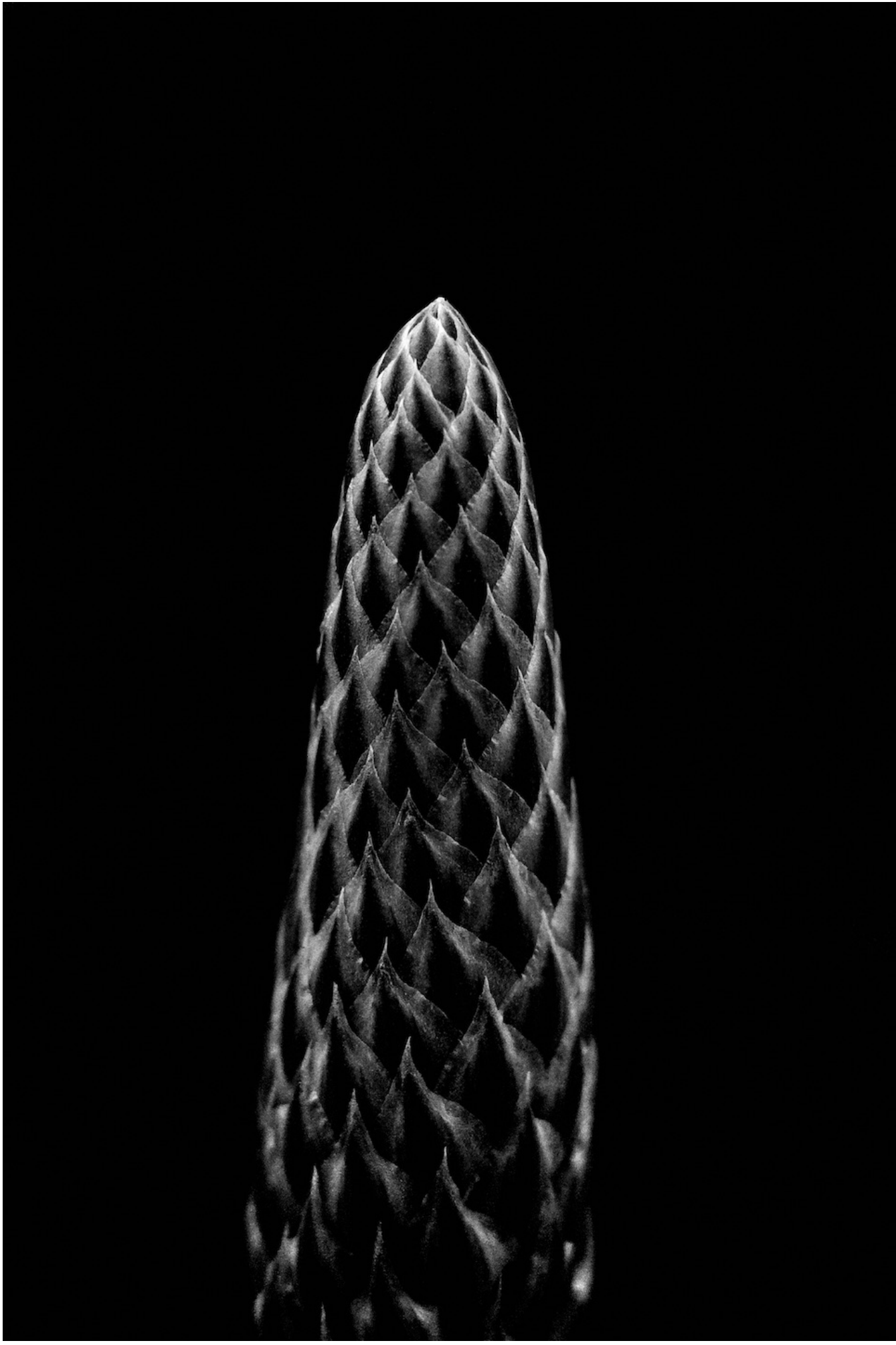
Why Macro Mode?

- See more by focusing on the overlooked.
- Capture textures, patterns, and details that often go unnoticed.
- Transform mundane moments into compelling compositions.

What to Look For

- Textures on walls, sidewalks, and buildings.
- Cracks in the pavement or footprints left behind.
- Curves and bends in the streets.

By using macro mode on the Ricoh you will unlock so much more creative potential. The shift in focus opens up an endless world of possibilities where ordinary objects become extraordinary subjects. Personally, I have been experimenting with photographing botanicals using macro mode on my Ricoh GRIII and Ricoh GRIIIx







Ricoh GRIII or Ricoh GRIIIx?



Paris, 2023 - Shot on Ricoh GRIII

Why I Chose the 28mm

After spending a year with each camera, the 28mm focal length of the GR III proved to be more intuitive and adaptable to various shooting scenarios.

The Ricoh GR III, with its 28mm lens, offers a more forgiving and versatile shooting experience. It's ideal for capturing spontaneous moments without the need for meticulous composition.

The wider field of view allows for capturing scenes with more context, making it perfect for a visual diary approach to photography.

Versatility on the streets

In crowded urban environments, the 28mm lens excels at capturing full-body shots and dynamic street scenes without stepping back. You want to be able to capture maybe their full stride — and being able to easily do that with a wider focal length lends itself well to this kind of photography. You want to be able to capture people in their full stride — and being able to easily do that with a wider focal length lends itself well to this kind of photography.

Don't Flip Back and Forth

Consistency in focal length helps maintain a cohesive workflow and visual style. Consistency and discipline lead to results. While I enjoy both focal lengths, shooting with the 28mm lends itself much better for the sidewalk surfing style of street photography I practice in my hometown Philadelphia.



Queens, 2023 - Shot on Ricoh GRIII

Final Thoughts



Rome, 2023 - Shot on Ricoh GRIIIx

The Ricoh GR is transforming the way I view the world. Simplifying my workflow has reignited my love for photography. By focusing on light, shadow, and the joy of the process, I've found a way to make photography feel fresh and exciting every day.

With the Ricoh GR, every detail becomes significant. It's a tool that encourages mindfulness and presence, allowing me to connect more deeply with my surroundings. This camera has not only changed my photography but also my perspective on life. It's a reminder that simplicity, presence, and authenticity are the keys to meaningful art.

Resources & Links

- [Start Here](#)
 - [Blog](#)
 - [YouTube Channel](#)
 - [Spotify Podcast](#)
 - [Ricoh GR Example Photos](#)
 - [The Ultimate Ricoh GR Street Photography Guide](#)

 - [Street Photography Tip with the Ricoh GR III](#)
 - [Ricoh GR IIIx Snap Exposure Tip](#)
 - [Black and White JPEGs Explained](#)
 - [Street Photography Technique with the GR III](#)
 - [High Contrast Street Photography \(GR IIIx\)](#)
 - [Street Photography as a Visual Diary](#)
 - [Why I Photograph Every Day](#)
 - [Street Photography Masterclass \(GR III\)](#)
 - [Ricoh GR IIIx Review: Best Camera for Street Photography](#)
 - [Snapshot Mastery: GR III & IIIx High-Contrast B&W](#)
 - [Why the Ricoh GR III is the Best Camera for Street](#)
 - [My Ricoh GR III Settings](#)
 - [GR III Highlight-Weighted Metering Mode](#)
 - [Crop Mode on Ricoh GR III](#)
 - [Ricoh GR III for Street Photography](#)
 - [How the Ricoh GR Brings Joy Back](#)
 - [The GR IIIx Changed How I See the World](#)
 - [Why I Prefer the GR III Over the IIIx](#)
 - [Ricoh GR IV Announced](#)
 - [The T-Rex Technique](#)
 - [My Street Photography Workflow](#)
 - [The Ultimate iPad Pro Workflow](#)
 - [How to Edit Street Photos in the iPad Photos App](#)
 - [Ricoh GRIII Photography POV](#)
-