

Why Black & White Street Photography Will Change How You See the World

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

Today we're diving into **why black and white street photography will change how you see the world.**

For the past three years, I've been seeing life differently through the act of making black and white photographs—and it's truly transformed how I see everyday life. When I'm out there on the street, I'm not necessarily trying to photograph what life *is*, but what life *could be*—through the art of **abstracting reality**.

From Color to Monochrome

In the beginning, I photographed everything in color. I used to shoot RAW files because that's simply what the camera produced, not because I made an intentional creative choice. My workflow was complex, and color was just the default.

But then I made a shift.

Now, I shoot **small JPEG files** with **high-contrast black and white baked into my camera**. No editing. No Lightroom. What the camera sees is what I get.

“By building my process into the camera, I made black and white a conscious choice.”

This shift stripped photography down to its **essence**—light and shadow. The word photography comes from the Greek *phos* (light) and *graphé* (writing). Black and white returns us to that essence: **writing with light**.

From Documenting the External to Revealing the Internal

In the past, I documented the world for what it was—external reality. Now, I photograph the internal. My perception, emotion, and intuition drive the image.

“I’m not photographing facts anymore—I’m photographing my soul.”

This process isn’t about rational control but about photographing from the gut. By stripping down to monochrome, I can focus on **form, gesture, and feeling**—the purest expressions of life.

Seeing Beyond Reality

When I look through my Ricoh GR’s LCD screen and see the world in black and white, it feels like I’m seeing *beyond the veil*.

*“Color shows the world as it is.
Black and white reveals what the world means.”*

It crushes the distractions. It shows what’s essential in light and hides what doesn’t matter in shadow. Through black and white, I see patterns, shapes, human behavior, and emotion with greater intensity. It’s not about documentation anymore—it’s about **interpretation**.

*“What you see isn’t what you get.
What you get is what you didn’t see.”*

The Workflow

Here's my simple setup:

- **Camera:** Ricoh GR III / GR IIIx
- **File Type:** Small JPEG, High-Contrast B&W
- **Mode:** AV Mode, f/8
- **Snap Focus:** 2m
- **Metering:** Highlight-weighted
- **Minimum Shutter Speed:** 1/500
- **Post-Processing:** None

This workflow keeps me fast, spontaneous, and prolific.

By importing thousands of photos at lightning speed, I spend more time shooting than editing.

“The faster the process, the more alive the photography becomes.”

Quantity leads to quality. Through repetition and discipline, I've produced more meaningful work than ever before.

Cloudy Days Are a Gift

Color photography depends on light conditions.

Black and white doesn't.

Overcast skies, rain, or harsh daylight—all become opportunities.

“Cloudy days act as nature's diffuser.”

Rain, reflections, and textures become expressive tools.

Every condition is photographable.

I'm no longer waiting for golden hour—**I photograph all day, every day.**

“I’m no longer on the hunt for my next best photo. I know that my next photo is my best photo.”

Photography as Becoming

Black and white photography has taught me that art is not about mastery—it’s about **becoming**.

It’s about change, evolution, and experimentation.

“You cannot make the same photograph twice.”

Every day on the street offers new possibilities.

Each photograph becomes a sketch, a charcoal drawing on the page—raw, expressive, immediate.

“Using black and white returns you to the childlike state of play.”

By giving yourself creative constraints—one camera, one lens, one vision—you gain freedom.

Constraint breeds creativity.

Black and White Is Freedom

By removing color, I’ve removed perfectionism.

Now I embrace play, spontaneity, and imperfection.

Each photo is a sketch of my perception, a visual diary of my soul.

“Black and white photography is freedom.”

It's allowed me to photograph more, think less, and see deeper.
Even in mundane moments, I can find form, emotion, and life.
It's transformed not only how I photograph—but how I see.

Final Thoughts

By returning to black and white, I've returned to the **essence of photography**—light and shadow, form and feeling, intuition and soul.
It's changed the way I see the world and how I live within it.

*"See beyond the surface.
Photograph what you feel, not just what you see."*

If this philosophy resonates with you, visit dantesisofo.com to explore my guides and free eBooks:

- **The Ultimate Ricoh GR Street Photography Guide**
- **Mastering Layering in Street Photography**
- **Contact Sheets: Behind the Scenes of My Process**

Black and white photography has simplified my workflow, freed my mind, and made me fall in love with photography again.
It's not about control—it's about becoming.

Peace.