

Daido Moriyama Changed My Street Photography – Record 1, Record 2, Quartet

“Photography is drawing with light. Return to the essence: light and shadow.”

What’s poppin’, people? It’s Dante. This morning we’re flipping through some of my favorite Daido Moriyama books—**Record 1**, **Record 2**, and **Quartet**—and just chatting candidly about the work. I’m not here to pretend I know every detail of photography history or to lecture on the grand impact of his career. I’m here to look, feel, and speak honestly about why these pictures hit me—and how they’re shaping my own approach.

Low-tech setup warning: it’s literally my iPhone and a step stool. No tripod. No fancy lights. Just me, the books, and the pictures. Let’s jump in.

Why Moriyama Resonates Right Now

I look at photo books for **images**—not the narrative, not the text. I want to **ingest pictures** that resonate and extract what I can apply to my own visual language. With Moriyama, that language is **high-contrast black-and-white**, gritty, raw, sometimes blurry or out of focus—an aesthetic **choice** that points to something deeper.

Here’s the key: **style isn’t just an aesthetic.**

It’s not simply “color vs. black-and-white,” “muted vs. saturated,” or “grainy vs. clean.” Style is **what you choose to include inside the four corners**—and what you leave out. That’s your world.

Inside the Four Corners

When you put a frame around reality, that becomes your interpretation of it. You can emulate lenses, focal lengths, even a way of working—but the **core** of a personal voice comes from **intuition**, curiosity, and what your inner child points you toward. It's **what** you photograph more than **how**.

Moriyama cracks open **what's photographable**. He gives me permission to see the **mundane** as worthy. And honestly, **making the mundane sing** is harder than chasing the obvious spectacular.

The Mundane, Made Sublime

Looking through Moriyama's frames, I feel **his internal state**, not just his aesthetic. The work is a mirror of the person: a **wanderer**, a **stray dog**, drifting through the city, following intuition, photographing spontaneously.

Sometimes I can't tell what's real or staged—and **I don't want to know**. The beauty of street photography is that we're working in reality. We **document fact**—time and place—and yet the right frame can feel **surreal**. That tension is electric.

Return to the Essence: Light and Shadow

Photography = light (phōs) + writing (graphē).

Moriyama's pictures pull me back to that root. The high contrast, the edge of blur, the rawness—these are all ways of saying: **light and shadow first**.

Instant sketches of life, drawn with light.

When you work this way—quick, loose, embodied—you’re not just recording what *is*. You’re revealing **what it could be** through the camera’s translation of reality.

Blur the Line: Document & Abstraction

What I take from Moriyama isn’t just “high-contrast B&W.” It’s the **philosophy**: walk, wander, obey the gut, photograph from intuition. That’s where the pictures live that **penetrate the soul**.

I used to flip books and analyze single frames for technique. Now, with Moriyama, I’m absorbing an **approach**:

- **Wander** without pretense.
 - **Listen** to the gut.
 - **Photograph** the ordinary.
 - **Affirm life** with the shutter.
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The Addictive Walk

Street photography rewards an **addictive personality** in the best sense: the need to move, to roam, to explore. You can feel that in these frames. He loves the process. And that’s contagious.

When the mechanics get easy—body position, background vs. moment, timing—**boredom** creeps in. The antidote is to **return to Day One** every day. Play. Say **yes** to life with a single click.

Snapshot as Pure Form

The **snapshot** is the purest photograph: a split second, a gut “yes.” Maybe it’s a shaft of light on steps, a flare across a storefront, or the shimmer of a subway wall. Click. **Affirmation.**

For me, photography has become **saying yes to life**—finding the sublime inside the everyday, on the same so-called mundane street, again and again.

Stripping Down to See More

Color can be a distraction. Gear can be a distraction. Travel can be a distraction. I’m **stripping to black-and-white**, high contrast, and a **simple, streamlined workflow** so I can return to that childlike state—**infinite curiosity and wonder**—every day.

Limits don’t confine me; they **unlock** me.

A Visual Diary of the Present

Wandering with curiosity, photographing loosely, I’m building a **visual diary**—not because I have some grand statement, but because meaning surfaces in the pictures themselves. That’s the Moriyama ethos I’m taking with me:

- **Find joy in the process.**
- **Find meaning in the mundane.**
- **Embrace the present.**
- **Let intuition lead.**

You might not live forever—but you can make a photograph. And that’s enough reason to go out today, follow your gut, and press the shutter.

Peace.