

Why I Switched to Black & White Photography: Joy, Change, and the Return to Essence

Best SEO YouTube Title:

Why I Switched to Black & White Photography (After 7 Years in Color)

What's poppin, people? It's Dante. Currently going for a hike here in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia. Welcome to the woods. The pavilion is closed today, so no Treehouse symposium, but maybe that's a good thing. When the world blocks a path, you take the side trail. And so I turned on the GoPro Mini, 1080p, 30fps SuperView, crispy and honest, just to talk through an idea that's been on my mind for three years straight.

This is the story of **why I transitioned from color to black and white photography**, why it has changed me, and why this simple shift has brought more joy into my life than anything I've done in photography.

Change Is Happiness

I think the simplest way to frame all of this is that **change is happiness**. When you evolve, when you transform, when you shake things up, you create friction. But through friction you grow. You break a layer. You move into a new version of yourself.

For seven years, I photographed exclusively in color. Then, somewhere around 2022, I hit a wall. A weird wall. The kind of wall where you realize you're *too good* at something. Not in some grandiose sense, but in a very matter-of-fact, embodied way.

It became **too easy** to:

- Position myself in the right place
- Read the background
- Feel the timing
- Press the shutter at the decisive moment

Good photographs became predictable. Travel somewhere new? Easy. Find a story? Easy. Compose something striking? Easy. And **ease**, over time, is death for an artist.

So I did what felt right.
I destroyed everything.

To Destroy Is To Create

I gathered my Fujifilm cameras, went to B&H in New York City, sold them all, and walked out with **two Ricoh GR cameras**. That day in November 2022 marked the start of my transition.

I needed a constraint.
I needed a challenge.
I needed a clean slate.

Because to destroy is to create.
And sometimes the only way forward is to set fire to the old.

Returning to Light Itself

When I switched to black and white, something clicked into place.

Fōs meaning *light*.

Graphē meaning *writing*.

Photography is literally **writing with light**.

And in black and white, I feel like I'm returning to the root of that definition. The pure medium. The skeleton. The pulse. The photon. The shadow.

When I shoot monochrome, I'm not documenting the world as-is.

I'm creating **instant sketches of light**.

Brush strokes made out of highlights and shadowplay.

It's not nostalgia.

It's not mood.

It's not "timelessness."

It's **essence**.

The Workflow That Saved My Life

One thing that dragged me down in photography was the **clunky process**:

- RAW files
- Lightroom
- Hard drives
- Backups
- Crashes
- Overheating laptops
- Slow imports
- Endless sliders and adjustments

It was a digital swamp.

Switching to **high-contrast black-and-white JPEGs baked in-camera** saved me.

My Ricoh GR III shoots:

- Small 4 MB JPEGs
- Maximum contrast
- Crushed blacks
- Blown whites
- Grit
- Grain
- A file that is already finished

I **cannot** change it to color.

I **cannot** “fix” it later.

I **cannot** tweak it to death.

This is freedom.

It is the simplest workflow possible.

The fastest.

The most joyful.

And because it’s joyful, this process gives me **longevity**.

I can see myself shooting this way for the next 50 years.

Simplicity Creates Play

When I removed the viewfinder, something strange and beautiful happened.

I stopped taking myself so seriously.

No more precision aiming through a rangefinder.

No more “perfect” compositions.

No more obsessing.

Shooting with the LCD lets me **play**:

- I tinker
- I experiment
- I loosen up
- I return to the amateur mind

Every day becomes **day one** again.

And returning to day one is exactly where an artist should live.

Beyond the Veil

One of the most magical aspects of shooting monochrome with heavy contrast is this:

What you see isn't what you get.

What you get is what you didn't see.

The camera reveals the invisible:

- Light slicing across a leaf
- Microtextures
- Shadows hiding in the corners
- Highlights that bloom into new shapes

It feels like peering beyond the veil.

Like I'm collaborating with reality instead of controlling it.

This keeps me curious.

It keeps me surprised.

And surprise keeps me alive.

A Shift From Documentation to Interpretation

Color photographs say:

"This happened."

Black and white photographs whisper:

"This is how I feel."

This shift from documentation to interpretation is everything.
I'm no longer just putting four corners around life.
I'm allowing my **internal world** to bleed through the frame.

This is how I want to work.
This is how I want to see.
This is how I want to grow.

Endlessly Becoming

So these are my candid thoughts on why I switched to black and white photography.
It's personal.
It's intuitive.
It's alive.

And honestly, I don't see myself going back.

Black and white gives me:

- Joy
- Speed
- Simplicity

- Longevity
- Surprise
- Play
- A return to the amateur mind

I want to photograph until the day I die.
And this is the workflow that will carry me there.

More thoughts on photography coming soon.
Stay tuned.