

The Snapshot as the Purest Form of Artistic Expression

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

This morning I'm thinking about this notion that making a snapshot is the purest form of artistic expression as a street photographer.

When I have my Ricoh in my pocket, I pull it out, press the button, and snapshot whatever I find throughout my day—without thinking rationally about what it is that I have to say. To me, this is liberation. This is what it means to express yourself authentically.

I think that ultimately our style as an artist—our style in how we approach the streets and make pictures—is something that only comes after time spent in the world experiencing life.

Photography, ultimately, is a somatic experience. It's a bodily experience of embracing the sounds, the sights, and the smells of the street. This is what channels through me while I'm practicing street photography.

As I photograph and respond to my instinct, and simply let the chips fall as they may, I find that over time—through compounding each and every day of chipping away at life—your style arrives naturally. It comes through the subconscious mind, through the things that you find, and through what you place within the four corners of the photograph.

I find this to be a much more empowering way to think about photography, as opposed to this tradition of putting on your camera and your lens and going out into the world to tell visual stories.

The more interesting approach I've found is embracing imperfection openly, responding to instinct, and letting things unfold naturally. Over time, through photographing this way authentically, your purest form of expression begins to arise in the photographs you make.

It comes from the subconscious mind. It comes from time. It comes from photographing throughout the day.

And it comes from embracing the spirit of play—
not taking photography so seriously,
but immersing yourself in the moment,
immersing yourself in the chaos,
in the bodily experience of being alive,
and embracing spontaneity.