

Why I Choose Black & White for Street Photography

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

Today I want to talk about why I choose black and white for my street photography.

For the past three years, I've been entering this period of change with my practice by photographing in black and white. On a technical level, I'm using the Ricoh GR III or the Ricoh GR IIIx with a high-contrast black and white JPEG profile cranked all the way up. All the shadows, all the detail — it's baked directly into the file. I don't post-process the images you see.

That technical choice is intentional. I'm setting up my camera in a way that doesn't get in the way, so I can enter the flow state more easily. That's the number one reason I transformed my process from color to black and white. Everything feels simplified and streamlined. Photography becomes effortless. The flow state feels inevitable.

And that's where I believe a photographer needs to be.

In the streets, walking endlessly.

Because what is a photographer's goal, really, other than to walk, explore, wander, and cultivate curiosity?

By stripping away the complexity of color and returning to black and white, photography has integrated seamlessly into my everyday life. There's something about this shift that's allowing me to find more joy in the practice, generally.

Abstraction, the Sublime, and Seeing Differently

What I appreciate most about black and white photography is how it allows me to abstract reality.

When I'm on the streets, I don't experience life linearly. I often feel this sense of the sublime — that disbelief that we're on a giant rock orbiting a ball of fire, held together by what feels like duct tape, falling endlessly through space.

That emotional quality of life is more easily evoked through black and white. By removing color, honing in on negative space, and pushing contrast to the maximum, I'm able to translate that internal feeling into the photograph.

Life isn't always what it seems. Life can become a dream when you raise the camera to your eye and look more closely.

These days, I'm not trying to make photographs of what life *is*. I'm trying to make photographs of what life *could be* — my own interpretation of reality.

That's why I love black and white. It allows me to take something extremely ordinary and lift it into something extraordinary.

Imperfection, Play, and Flow

The photographs in this collection aren't perfect. Sometimes there are mistakes. Sometimes there's a roughness to them.

But those imperfections *become* the perfection.

Black and white photography lets me work loosely. I'm not trying to control everything. I let the chips fall where they may. I embrace play.

That playfulness puts me in a state of becoming — a place where I never want to feel like I've found the one image I'll make for the rest of my life. By returning to black and white, there's always more to see, more to explore, more to articulate.

Stripping away color has revived my love for life. I'm seeing anew each day, with curiosity.

By focusing on shapes, forms, moments, and emotional quality, I'm able to evoke an internal state through the act of observing — of putting four corners around something.

And that's why black and white fits my lifestyle on a deeply personal level.

Between Documentation and Abstraction

I'm no longer trying to depict life as fact.

I'm working in that fine line between documentation and abstraction — where a photograph feels like a fact, but it's really just a slice, a fragment. Something that prompts a question rather than provides an answer.

By abstracting the world through black and white, I'm able to create images that ask the viewer to look more deeply.

The streamlined workflow, the simplicity, the ability to enter flow effortlessly — all of it allows me to cultivate authentic expression. Walking, observing, photographing — it becomes inevitable.

And that inevitability brings joy.

Infinite Potential in the Mundane

I can be anywhere — a random park, a random corner, any city, any time — and because I'm seeing the world this way, elevating the mundane through the removal of color, I find infinite potential everywhere.

Light, shadow, form — that's enough.

Even walking the same street every day, the question becomes: *Can you still find something new to say?*

That's where photography is born — in boredom, openness, and the challenge of cultivating curiosity.

Living and photographing in Philadelphia, the city lends itself to black and white. The architecture, the timelessness, the history — it works. And on a practical level, black and white makes the game easier. More effortless.

Abstraction becomes the solution to the mundane.

Like a river that's always changing, light is always shifting. I can never make the same photograph twice. By following light and returning to black and white, I'm always returning to a blank slate.

Returning to Day One

Shooting in black and white isn't just a technical decision for me.

It's a way to align my body, my soul, and my spirit — to enter a flow state each and every day. It's a way of returning to day one.

Hopefully, by sharing these ideas, you can understand why I photograph this way and where I'm headed with my work.

That's pretty much it.

Thank you for reading.
I'll see you in the next one.

Peace.