

## Ricoh GR IV Monochrome Diary #1 – Red Filter Street Photography

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

Today we're starting something new on the channel – a little behind-the-scenes look into my photography process.

This is officially **Street Photography Diary Entry #1**, where I'm sharing my visual diary with the **Ricoh GR4 Monochrome**. I'm going through some photos from a recent walk and talking about what I'm discovering with this camera.

The very first photograph from this walk in my hometown, Philadelphia, was made using **the red filter**.

And honestly – the red filter is insane.

I'm starting to realize that if you're a monochrome shooter, **this upgrade is absolutely worth it**. Having a monochrome sensor paired with a red filter changes the game drastically.

Even just seeing the results on the camera screen has me extremely excited.

### The Red Filter Changes Everything

When I shoot with the Ricoh GR4 Monochrome, I typically use **multi-segment metering mode**.

In scenes like this, I'll usually use the **EV to slightly underexpose**, especially when using the red filter. That helps preserve highlights and also boosts contrast.

In the past, when I was shooting with the **GR III**, I would try to replicate this look using my JPEG recipe:

- High contrast
- Small JPEG files
- Underexposing slightly

But even doing that, **I could never achieve this result.**

The way the bridge pops out from that black background here is completely nuanced in a way that surprised me. I personally had never used a red filter before, and now I'm seeing completely new results.

## **My Simple Monochrome Workflow**

I shoot **small JPEG files**, which makes my workflow extremely simple.

My process is straightforward:

- Import photos directly to my iPad
- Publish immediately to my website
- Back everything up with Lightroom CC cloud
- Move on

That's it.

It's a **very streamlined way of working**, and it keeps photography feeling light and fluid.

## **Why I Photograph in Monochrome**

For me, shooting monochrome is **not an aesthetic decision.**

It's actually a **solution to a problem.**

Photography asks the question:

**How can we articulate the mundane nature of everyday life in new ways?**

And for me, the answer is simple:

**Follow the light.**

By stripping away color and photographing in black and white, I find infinite ways to keep returning to photography every day.

### **The Light Is the Subject**

These days, I'm not trying to photograph interesting things.

I'm not searching for moments.

I'm simply **looking at the light.**

When you think about the medium of photography, it's really just **drawing with light.**

So when I'm walking the streets, **light itself becomes the subject.**

I'm not looking for impactful photographs.

I'm not looking for anything specific.

I'm simply following the light.

### **Walking the Schuylkill River Trail**

On this particular walk, I was along the **Schuylkill River Trail** here in Philadelphia.

There's a beautiful new suspension bridge that connects the boardwalk to the Grey's Ferry area.

I walk this trail almost every day, especially when the weather is nice.

And on the surface, these walks are **completely mundane**.

It's the same path every day.

A narrow trail.

You can't really veer off.

Just the road ahead.

But once you embrace monochrome photography, **these spaces become infinitely interesting**.

Because now I'm not dependent on:

- an interesting character
- a dramatic moment
- a clever juxtaposition

Instead, I'm simply letting **light elevate the mundane**.

## **Surprise Is the Fuel**

At the end of the day, I'm curious about **how light renders onto my monochrome sensor**.

Using the red filter:

- the sky crushes into deep blacks
- subjects pop with high contrast
- scenes become completely transformed

And I allow myself to be surprised.

That surprise is actually what keeps me awake when I return home and start reviewing the photos.

I'm excited to see:

**How did life render on the sensor today?**

### **Making Frames in the Light**

When I see something interesting, I'll raise the camera and make **lots of frames**.

For example, I was photographing a pool of light with these sticks coming up from the ground.

I moved around while shooting, trying to see how the light beams interacted with the scene.

These small moments bring me a lot of joy.

And when I get home and review the photos, the novelty that light provides keeps me endlessly curious.

### **Photographing My Backyard**

Because of this, I no longer feel the need to travel somewhere new to photograph.

My backyard here along the river trail is **more than enough**.

By simplifying everything and working with monochrome, the world opens up again.

## **The Red Filter Surprises**

I also noticed something interesting while shooting toward the light with the red filter.

Sometimes these strange flares appear.

There's likely another surface between the filter and lens that causes these reflections.

I was photographing a climber on the suspension bridge and noticed these unexpected flares appearing in the frame.

Once again — **the surprise keeps me curious.**

## **Small Glimmers of Light**

Even the smallest things catch my attention now.

A reflection in a window.

A glimmer of light on the ground.

That's enough.

I'm just trying to stay sensitive on the street and photograph everything — while primarily **following the light.**

## **Playing Double Dutch on Chestnut Street**

Later that day I walked down **Chestnut Street.**

The weather was beautiful. The sun was out and people were everywhere.

I came across a group of girls playing **double dutch.**

Immediately I jumped into the scene.

I asked them:

“Can I get in?”

So I started playing double dutch.

Now listen — I **do not know how to play double dutch.**

They were spinning the rope ridiculously fast.

They were definitely trying to mess me up.

But the beauty of the **Ricoh GR** is that I don't appear as a photographer.

I'm just a guy walking down the street.

So I start playing.

Then I pull the camera up.

Suddenly I'm **inside the scene**, making photographs.

## **Photography Is About Life**

The photographer's duty is simply to **be present.**

To engage with humanity.

Because photography actually has **nothing to do with photography.**

It has everything to do with **how you experience life.**

The real traits of a photographer are things like:

- curiosity
- courage
- intuition

Composition, timing, and lighting are easy.

Those things come with repetition.

But curiosity and courage — **those are the real skills.**

### **Don't Take Photography So Seriously**

My philosophy is simple:

#### **Play.**

Let the chips fall where they may.

The more you play, the more you develop your **authentic way of seeing.**

I don't go out pretending to be some serious visual storyteller trying to make impactful photographs.

I'm just living my life.

The camera comes along for the ride.

And I photograph what I find.

### **Philadelphia Photo Club**

At the end of the day I stopped by a local photo club at the **Philadelphia Library.**

If you're from Philly, check out the **art section where the photo books are.**

This was my first time joining the club.

I met some interesting people and presented some new work.

## **Flux Volume 1 – Tokyo**

I showed my new book:

### **Flux Volume 1**

This is my work from **Tokyo – 13 days of photographing**.

The photographs turned out beautifully in the small 5×8 trade book from Blurb.

I feel like after a decade of photographing, my vision finally came together on this trip.

I pushed myself in:

- Shibuya Crossing
- the alleyways of Shinjuku
- pools of light across the city

And I became fascinated with **faces** as the central subject.

For 13 days straight I was completely obsessed with photographing Tokyo.

## **A New Series on the Channel**

This street photography diary will become a new series on the channel.

I'll share the photographs I'm making **as I go out and shoot every day**.

Work in progress.

The process.

The evolution.

Because photography is a constant state of **becoming**.

A state of **flux**.

Every day is simply another opportunity to make new frames.

Thank you for watching.

And I'll see you in the next one.

Peace.