

The Zen of the Ricoh Monochrome

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

Currently walking around Philadelphia with the Ricoh GR IV Monochrome, thinking today about **the zen of the Ricoh Mono.**

You kind of realize when you go through all the different cameras and choices you have that if you're looking for the **most compact, easy point-and-shoot camera to always have with you**, it's inevitable that you wind up with Ricoh.

There's really no other options. No other choices.

And so the **ultimate creative freedom is removing decisions.**

The zen of Ricoh is that it strips away all choice and leaves you with **a black box with a shutter button and a lens.**

That's it.

All you're left with is **pure instinct.**

Stripping Photography Down to Its Essence

With a streamlined workflow, shooting with a monochrome sensor strips the camera down to the **essence of the medium.**

Photo meaning light.

Graphé meaning drawing.

Drawing with light.

Even the decision between color and black-and-white disappears when you shoot with a monochrome sensor.

And I think the Ricoh Monochrome fits perfectly within the philosophy of the Ricoh ecosystem.

It simplifies everything.

The simpler you make things, the better.

Photography doesn't get in the way of my everyday life.

Photography is simply **a joy**.

Photography as a Visual Diary

When you treat photography too seriously — wiping the lens down, going out looking to make a powerful visual story, trying to make impactful images — honestly it just becomes boring.

Photography starts to feel like **a chore**.

My ethos is simple:

Live your everyday life and bring the camera for the ride.

The photographs I make are simply a **visual diary of my day**.

I'm out walking.

The weather's nice.

I'm commuting.

I'm not trying to photograph anything.

I'm just living my life.

The Closest Thing to Not Having a Camera

The Ricoh slips in your pocket.

It's the closest thing to **not having a camera at all**.

You can literally conceal it in your hand.

And that's exactly what I want.

I just exist in the world, and when a moment comes, **I'm ready**.

I don't have to search.

I don't have to try.

I simply let **life flow toward me**.

The Pinnacle of Simplicity

It really feels like we've arrived at the **pinnacle of photography**.

You can't really simplify it any more than this.

Small JPEG files are incredibly liberating.

All the processing is done in-camera.

A 4MB file imports instantly.
Uploading is effortless.
Everything is frictionless.

Because of that:

- Zero decision fatigue
- Zero hesitation
- Zero friction

And that's why photography fits perfectly into my everyday life.

My Simple Ricoh Setup

Right now I'm in **Rittenhouse, Philadelphia**, going for a stroll.

My setup is extremely simple:

- Snap focus at **2 meters**
- **f/8**
- **Aperture Priority (AV mode)**
- **Multi-segment metering**

If I want more dramatic images, I'll just underexpose using the exposure compensation dial.

Usually:

- **-0.3**
- **-0.7**
- **-1**

Over time you become fluid with it.

You don't think.

You just feel it.

Handling the Camera on the Street

My grip is simple.

Sometimes I'll hold:

- Thumb underneath the camera
- Middle finger on the shutter

This lets me hold the camera very loosely.

Then I can flick my wrist slightly to move between **horizontal and vertical frames instantly**.

If someone approaches from the right, I can flick into vertical.

If someone approaches from the left, I can drop my hand and shoot vertically with a subtle motion.

You can even use a **claw grip**:

Thumb on the side of the camera, index finger on the shutter, allowing you to make stealthy photos.

All these movements are **micro-movements**.

Almost invisible.

Embracing Imperfection

If I see a subject with bright clothing and strong contrast, I might underexpose by **-0.7** to make the frame darker and more dramatic.

But honestly, I don't obsess over exposure.

There's something beautiful about **imperfection**.

Overexposure.

Underexposure.

Contrast that's a little rough.

Those imperfections often feel aesthetically powerful.

Flow State and Instinct

Once you remove all the technical thinking, something interesting happens.

The flow state emerges.

From the flow state, **your instinct appears**.

And with time and consistency, your instinct compounds.

That's where **your authentic expression** comes from.

That's where **your style** comes from.

Your style isn't born from aesthetic decisions.

I believe **style is instinctual**.

But instinct requires time.

You have to spend time responding to your instinct for it to reveal itself.

Simplifying the Process to Find Your Style

The fastest way to access instinct is to **simplify the process**.

Strip everything down to its bare bones.

That's my entire workflow.

All I'm left with is **my response to life**.

The camera is just along for the ride.

Seeing Everything

When I walk around, I'm scanning everything.

Not just eye level.

I'm looking:

- Above me
- Below me
- At reflections in windows
- At textures on walls
- At discarded objects
- At architecture

- At puddles and reflections
- At gestures and faces

Everything becomes interesting when you approach photography with a **blank canvas mindset**.

You stop trying.

You forget what you think you know about photography.

And you move through the world with **sensitivity and curiosity**.

Quantity Reveals Quality

My goal is to remain open and curious.

I don't take the photographs too seriously.

Because the more photos I make, the more I can come back later and **extract the quality**.

From the quantity emerges the meaning.

Then I can decide:

- What matters
 - What's worth keeping
 - What becomes a memory
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Creating a New World

Street photographers often chase fleeting moments.

Photojournalists document events.

But my interest is a little different.

Yes, I'm interested in people and moments.

But underneath all that, my deeper goal is:

To create a new world.

To extract something from reality and **give birth to my own version of it.**

Photography Is Subjective

There is no objectivity in photography.

No universal definition of good or bad.

What matters is your **subjective interpretation of the world.**

Follow your curiosity.

Follow the inner child that just wants to play.

Ignore what's been done before.

Ignore what people say photography should be.

Affirming Life With Photography

Photography becomes a way of **saying yes to life**.

Not dwelling on photos from yesterday.

Not worrying about what you'll photograph tomorrow.

Just being present **right now** when the shutter clicks.

That's why I love photography.

And that's why I love the Ricoh.

Because it removes everything unnecessary and leaves you with the only thing that really matters:

Instinct.