

## Why I Hate Strategy in Street Photography

What's popping people? It's Dante.

Currently going for a beautiful walk here behind the art museum in Philadelphia, looking out towards my companion, Mercury.

*"Send this message up on your wings for the gods."*

My best friend Mercury. He's been there by my side all this time.

Yeah, so today's thought is about **strategy** and why I hate strategy.

You know, strategy. Looking for something. Hunting. Trying to tell a story. Having this sort of intellectual framework for how you're gonna compose something. These ideas in photography are just so limiting.

And so I say:

*Let the chips fall as they may.*

Stop trying to control everything.

The more you relinquish control and let go, the more you enter the flow.

And flow occurs where thought dies.

## Thought Is Stagnation

Stagnation lies inside your mind with all those big-brain ideas rattling around in your head.

Motivation lies in your two legs moving.

Experiencing life.

Clicking the shutter.

Not in thought. Not in your mind.

Action.

Doing.

Shooting.

Piling up 1,000 new frames today.

To me, the mode of operation is extremely simple:

**Remove all choices.**

Remove all ideas rattling around in your big brain.

Can we shut that off?

Can we shut off the thought?

Photography is merely a way for me to experience life in the now.

Simply being.

Simply here.

In the moment.

The photos I made yesterday? Irrelevant.

The photos I make tomorrow? Irrelevant.

Everything leading up to this point? Not real.

It's right here. Right now.

## **Embracing Chaos**

I'm standing on this cliff.

If I get stung by a bee right now, I might topple and fall and die.

But it's on the edge of the unknown — on the outskirts of the city — embracing chaos and danger, that I thrive.

And so I say:

*Treat each day like it could be your last.*

Have a blast.

Embrace play.

There is no hierarchy between your frames.

What's good or bad?

Shut off all the noise.

All the chatter.

The thousand schizophrenic voices telling you what to do, how to be, what's good, what street photography is supposed to look like.

Eliminate all of it.

Because by removing choices, you find freedom.

## The Paradox of Choice

Wow, look at how beautiful that shadow is.

Whoa.

Choice is a funny thing.

It's a paradox.

You think choice is freedom.

Go left. Go right.

But no.

There's only one option.

It's down this damn cliff.

If I go left, I'll fall on the sticks.

If I go right, I might get poison ivy.

What's in those bushes?

I don't know.

And so I just keep marching onwards.

Upwards or downwards — they're both the same.

Everything is in flux.

Everything will change.

So stop trying to arrange.

Stop trying to strategize everything.

Stop forcing a narrative or language upon what it is you're ultimately trying to say.

## **Authenticity Through Instinct**

By relinquishing control, only then can you find authenticity.

Through intuition.

Instinct.

Through *thumos*.

Through courage.

Through your heart.

Then you can actually say something.

But trying to attach language, rational control, intellectual structure – all that stuff happening up in your noggin?

That's what stops it.

So I just frolic along in the grass.

Pick up leaves.

Flowers.

Enjoy the day.

Not worrying about yesterday.

Not thinking about tomorrow.

Just picking up the damn camera each day and clicking the shutter more.

Because at the end of the day:

*I'm gonna make 1,000 new frames today.*

Tomorrow, I'll do the same.

And for me to get caught up in what's good or bad, arranging everything, trying to tell a story — it just gets in the way of actually doing.

## **Eliminate Thought**

You might call me lazy.

But I have no desire to do these things.

My only desire lies in instinct.

And doing.

So yeah.

The message of the day is pretty simple:

*Remove all thought.*

How?

I don't know.

Maybe you remove the black mirror.

The scrying device of distraction.

The thing that has you communing with fallen angels every day.

When you're out shooting, leave the phone at home.

Use it indoors if you need to do tasks at your computer or whatever.

But when you're outside?

Just be present.

Photograph.

## **Why I'm Leaning Into AI**

Honestly, one of the craziest things I've done to eliminate thought and decision-making is automating everything.

I'm leaning heavily into AI.

I want AI to replace the "brain" of my photography operation.

Sequencing.

Organizing.

Archiving.

Importing photos.

Going through photos.

Generating layouts.

All the mechanical backend stuff.

Why not let AI handle it?

So that we can simply go out and photograph.

Simply be.

Simply cultivate instinct.

Instead of sitting around in our rooms dwelling and thinking.

## **The Automated Zine Workflow**

I've actually developed an entire system where I upload my photos directly to my website and it automatically catalogs everything.

It reads the metadata.

Arranges everything chronologically.

Generates automatic zines.

Captions everything.

Designs the margins and gutters perfectly.

So whenever I upload 36 new pictures, the website recognizes them and automatically generates a new zine.

I can literally go home and print whatever I made today tonight.

That's the workflow.

All I really have to do now is go out and shoot.

Everything else is handled on the backend.

I still make my selections quickly through thumbnails, but eventually I want the system to evolve to the point where I don't even do that.

And honestly?

I'm genuinely looking forward to it.

Because the goal is simple:

*Eliminate control.*

Let it all fall as it may.

A stream.

Chronological.

Alive.

### **More Joy, Less Control**

The more I let go, the more joy I find in everyday life.

And that's ultimately what I seek through photography.

More joy.

More exuberance.

More enthusiasm for life.

I'm not worried about the photos.

I'm not thinking about the shots I made yesterday.

I'm just here.

Frolicking around barefoot in my town.

Throwing some poo at the wall.

Check it out.

The dirty mucky skukul.

Yeah.