

## **I Walk One Street Every Day in Philadelphia**

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

I'm currently walking down Lancaster Ave here in Philadelphia, and today's thought is about my current project: documenting every street in Philadelphia in Flux.

I'm giving myself a creative constraint—walking one street each day and photographing whatever I find.

In places like this, it's quite desolate. You look around and see warehouses, houses, neighborhoods, dilapidated sidewalks that I trip on and stub my bare feet against while trying to make a video, shoes hanging from wires, fire hydrants, infrastructure.

Very basic subject matter.

Very mundane things.

I'm looking at the cars. I'm looking at everything around me. There aren't many people here, and as a photographer who primarily works with humanity—photographing people, candid moments—this has become a really powerful exercise.

I don't only photograph people these days. I photograph all sorts of things. But if you've been looking for a creative challenge, I highly recommend giving this one a try:

**Follow one street each day and document the place closest to you.**

## **Thinking Like an Archivist**

City Hall here in Philadelphia is like the heart of the city.

There's a station there with all sorts of arteries connecting different neighborhoods throughout the city. As a photographer, I'm interested in hopping on the subway, taking trains to different places, following a street, and documenting whatever I find.

I'm beginning to think of myself less as a photographer—or even an artist—and more as an archivist.

Maybe even a cartographer.

Someone mapping space and time through photography.

The outcome of the work is digitally archived material on a website, with the ability to print physical zines, which I do daily.

It's incredibly fulfilling to come home, go through the photographs, and make something physical every single day.

### **The More You Walk, The More You See**

What's happening with this practice is that I'm shooting so much.

And I think that's a good thing.

The more you walk, the more you see.

The more you see, the more you photograph.

And the more you photograph, the more curious you become.

The practice fulfills its own goal.

**Increasing curiosity.**

If you're looking to increase your curiosity, follow your nose and forget everything you think you know.

Step out into the world.

Look at all the surfaces around you.

Notice the way light casts upon the world.

Watch textures emerge.

Watch patterns converge.

Photograph those things.

Follow your instinct.

I'm not thinking about outcomes with these photographs. I'm simply following instinct while simultaneously constraining myself to a single street.

I'm interested in signs.

I'm interested in the fleeting nature of life.

I'm interested in documenting space and time.

### **The Artwork Is the Archive**

This way of practicing photography feels very pure.

It's not about whether individual frames are great.

It's about the collection of images that describes space and time.

It's about creating an archive.

**The artwork is the archive.**

The photographs are simply the output of curiosity.

They are the residue of me waking up each day eager to explore a new place.

And over time, through collecting all these different frames, we begin to witness change.

When you look back at these photographs ten years from now, the streets will never be the same.

No two days will ever be the same.

No two photographs will ever be the same.

Everything is in flux.

Everything is changing.

**You Are Changing Too**

You are changing on a physiological level.

Your cells replenish.

You eat.

You sleep.

You accumulate new experiences.

And when you return to the street, you're seeing the world anew each day.

I find that by coming out here daily, I'm stepping into a stream of becoming.

A stream of evolution.

A stream of change.

Photography becomes the vehicle through which I participate in that process.

It's about embracing play.

Embracing openness.

Embracing an insatiable love for life.

That's what fuels me.

As much as I'm out here archiving the city, I'm equally fueled by curiosity and philosophy.

Returning to the street with openness.

Receptivity.

Empathy.

Curiosity for humanity.

And a desire to uplift the world through the medium.

### **Timestamping Fleeting Moments**

I'm trying to grab hold of fleeting moments and timestamp them.

With metadata.

With GPS coordinates.

With space and time on a map.

With a digital archive that grows daily.

With physical artifacts that continue to evolve.

Returning to a new street every day, no matter how mundane it seems, reveals endless novelty.

There are always new ways to practice photography.

Always new things to notice.

Always new ways of seeing.

## **Stop Trying to Make Great Images**

If you're looking for the ultimate creative challenge, walk one street every day and see what you find.

Let go of outcomes.

Let go of the idea that the images need to be great.

Let go of the idea that they need to please an audience.

Let go of genre.

If anything, think 300 years into the future.

Stop dwelling on what images look like now.

Stop thinking about what has been done over the last fifty or one hundred years.

Go back to photography's origin story.

Think about how the medium was used to preserve space and time.

Think about how photography can function as an archive of lived experience.

Beyond poetry.

Beyond storytelling.

Beyond intention.

Just moving through space and time and capturing what you find.

Not trying to make something important.

Not trying to make something impactful.

Just embracing the banal.

The mundane.

The infrastructure.

The snapshot.

And asking:

**What will this look like 300 years from now?**

## **Beyond the Photographer**

Don't worry about pleasing an audience.

Don't worry about whether the work makes sense.

Think beyond yourself.

Think beyond your lifetime.

Think about how the work might be viewed postmortem.

What happens when the archive outlives the photographer?

That question fascinates me.

### **Building a System Without Decisions**

What I'm building toward is a system where I go out and make photographs and Flux handles the rest.

The software I'm developing will go through the photographs and publish everything autonomously without me making decisions.

I'm trying to relinquish control as much as possible.

That's one reason I'm enriching my files with metadata.

I'm training software to cull my work and build projects autonomously.

What if you simply walked and photographed every day?

What if you never had to go home and review the frames?

What if you never had to dwell on what they meant?

What if you just kept moving?

Kept walking?

Kept shooting?

What if you became radically detached from the outcome?

The ultimate goal becomes simple:

*To be under the sun, walking endlessly.*

I find that deeply fascinating.

## **Photography as a Way of Being**

I just walked for an hour and a half, maybe two hours.

I already have around 800 photographs on my SD card.

I shoot it all.

I capture it all.

I'm trying to build a workflow that allows me to continue shooting without spending hours inside afterward.

Any time I spend indoors, I feel like my soul dies a little.

But when I'm outside, moving my body and photographing, I feel alive.

I feel like I exist outside the passage of time.

Through the creation of images, I remind myself:

*Maybe I can't live forever, but at least I can make a photograph.*

And so I keep making photographs.

Because photography, for me, is beyond the image.

It's a way of being.

A way of connecting with the moment.

The photograph is just a byproduct.

The image is simply evidence that I was here.

What I'm really seeking is the experience itself.

The practice.

The walking.

The noticing.

The feeling.

That's what matters.