

## **Philly in Flux: Surveying Philadelphia One Street at a Time**

Yo, what's poppin', people? It's Dante.

Today I want to share a project that I've been working on called **Philly in Flux**, where I essentially survey the streets of Philadelphia and photograph along my journey, documenting space and time.

The goal is simple:

**Cover the entirety of the city.**

So far I've completed 7 different projects, made over 1,000 photographs, and walked 51 miles in 27 hours throughout the month of June.

And honestly, it's been one of the most fulfilling projects I've ever worked on.

### **Mapping the City**

I built a map that tracks every street I've covered so far.

Most recently, I walked Passyunk Avenue. Each walk becomes its own project that you can open and explore individually.

For example:

- 118 photographs
- 9 kilometers walked
- 2.5 hours on foot

Every photograph is attached to a location on the map.

You can click any point and view the image made at that exact spot.

One feature I recently implemented allows you to open the photograph directly in Google Maps and compare it with Street View, so you can see precisely where the frame was made.

Yesterday I found myself wandering through abandoned industrial areas and junkyards. Looking back through the photographs afterward, it's fascinating to see how these forgotten places become part of the larger archive.

## **The Archive Is the Artwork**

Everything is cataloged on the Flux archive.

The project isn't really about making "great photographs."

It's about creating a document of space and time.

I'm not trying to do anything fancy.

I'm simply interested in preserving my hometown.

*The goal is to make a document of space and time.*

Every day I come home and create a zine from the walk.

## **Daily Zines**

Each zine contains 36 photographs.

As you flip through the pages, each image includes:

- Time
- Date
- Location
- GPS coordinates

- Photographer name

On the back is a simple contact sheet, a short manifest, and a QR code that links directly to the digital archive.

I built a cart feature into the website that lets me select 36 photographs and automatically generate a PDF.

Anyone can create their own version of a walk this way.

Ultimately, the digital archive is the primary output.

But the physical objects matter too.

I've already created several zines from these walks, and I genuinely enjoy sitting down and flipping through them.

They're printed on a cheap monochrome Brother LaserJet printer using ordinary copy paper.

And honestly?

I love it.

The imperfections are part of the aesthetic.

The grit, the grain, the disposable quality of the paper all feel aligned with the work itself.

## **Why This Project Feels Different**

One thing I've noticed is how satisfying it feels to end the day with something tangible.

The map updates.

The zine gets printed.

The chapter closes.

There is something incredibly rewarding about seeing the work accumulate.

I don't feel any urge to stop because the process itself is fulfilling.

I genuinely enjoy looking at the photographs.

I genuinely enjoy watching the archive grow.

And because of that, I simply keep going.

### **Creative Constraints Create Freedom**

While surveying the city, I'm still following my aesthetic instincts.

I'm still looking for:

- Light
- Shadow
- Shapes
- Texture

But what interests me most is the constraint.

*The tighter the creative constraint, the more creatively liberated I feel.*

Take Washington Avenue, for example.

It's full of warehouses, abandoned lots, and random junk cars.

On paper, there isn't much to photograph.

But that's exactly why it becomes interesting.

When there is no obvious subject, I start looking harder.

I begin noticing details beneath cars.

The way light falls across concrete.

The geometry of a shadow.

The texture of a wall.

The constraint forces me to pay attention.

And because of that, I'm making more photographs than ever before.

## **My Ricoh GR Setup**

One technical thing I've been doing with the Ricoh GR monochrome is using the red filter along with crop mode.

The crop mode is assigned to a shortcut.

A quick double tap switches me to a 50mm equivalent field of view.

That means I can move from:

- Macro mode
- To crop mode
- Back to 28mm

Almost instantly.

Most photographs are made while walking.

Tap. Tap. Click.

Tap. Tap.

Back to 28mm.

The workflow is incredibly fluid.

Being able to crop in quickly lets me photograph building tops, architectural details, and distant subjects without crossing the street.

The LCD-based shooting experience makes the entire process effortless.

And for a project built around covering ground quickly, that speed matters.

## **Photographing Infrastructure**

Most of the photographs are of inanimate things.

Sometimes people appear.

Sometimes interesting moments happen.

But generally I'm looking at:

- Buildings
- Signs
- Cars
- Doorways
- Utility poles
- Infrastructure

Anything that contributes to street life.

The city itself is the subject.

## **You Should Try This Yourself**

If you have a street, neighborhood, or city that you care about, I highly recommend trying a survey project of your own.

I recently opened a submission portal where people can upload their own mapped walks.

I've already received work from Christophe in France, who's documenting his own neighborhood.

Seeing other people use the tool has been incredibly rewarding.

The process is simple:

1. Upload photographs
2. Add a title
3. Add a location
4. Submit the walk

I'll review the project and add it to the catalog.

## **Unexpected Discoveries**

One of the most rewarding parts of the project has been what happens along the way.

While walking Ridge Avenue, I unexpectedly met the owner of the oldest home on the street.

He invited me inside.

I photographed the house and learned about its history.

Moments like that aren't something you can plan.

They happen because you're out there walking.

Because you're paying attention.

Recently I also walked Passyunk Avenue with my mother.

She pointed out parks and streets where she used to play as a child.

The walk became part photography project, part family history lesson.

Those moments have become just as important as the photographs themselves.

### **Thinking Like an Archivist**

I've started thinking less like a photographer and more like a cartographer or archivist.

Of course, I still have aesthetic preferences.

I still respond instinctively to light and composition.

But increasingly, I'm interested in the archive itself becoming the artwork.

*The miles walked, the places photographed, the timestamps, captions, and metadata are just as important as the photographs.*

That's the project.

Documenting space and time.

### **Preserving Change**

Walking Germantown Avenue was a perfect example.

You move through historic German architecture, stone facades, churches, and old homes.

Then suddenly you're surrounded by abandoned buildings, faded signs, construction sites, and modern developments.

The street transforms as you move through it.

You begin noticing:

- Architectural changes
- Economic shifts
- New developments
- Decaying infrastructure

All existing simultaneously.

The goal isn't to judge any of it.

It's simply to preserve it.

To create a record of what existed at a particular moment in time.

## **Unlocking the Map**

I even added a progress tracker to the project.

It shows:

- Streets covered
- Photographs made
- Miles walked

Watching the numbers grow is strangely satisfying.

It's almost like uncovering a map in a video game.

Every walk reveals a new section.

Every photograph adds another piece to the archive.

## **Walk More**

If there's one lesson this project has reinforced, it's this:

*The more you walk, the more you see. The more you see, the more you photograph.*

So what if the ultimate goal wasn't to photograph more?

What if the ultimate goal was simply to walk more?

That's how I've started orienting my days.

One street.

One avenue.

One creative constraint.

And by limiting the possibilities, I somehow find myself seeing more than ever before.

It's been an incredibly fulfilling journey so far, and I'm excited to continue documenting Philadelphia one street at a time.

Peace.