

## **Ricoh GR IV Monochrome, Eugene Atget, and the Dream of an Automated Photography System**

Yo, what's poppin', people?

I'm currently walking down Germantown Avenue, all the way from the top of Chestnut Hill to the river in Philadelphia. It's a pretty long walk. I'm just making my way downtown, going down the hill and photographing everything with the Ricoh GR IV Monochrome.

I'm doing geotagging today using the GR World app on my phone, and I'm very much inspired by the way Eugene Atget photographed 19th and 20th century Paris. Simply documenting the fleeting change of his city.

He photographed the doorways, the windows, the buildings, the infrastructure, and everything in between.

I'm essentially following within that tradition, but with a compact camera instead of a large-format wooden bellows camera with a rectilinear lens sitting on a tripod.

I'm playing with those same aesthetic sensitivities of high-contrast black-and-white photography using small JPEG files.

And yeah, I'm making this project as seamless and easy as possible.

I pretty much just walk down the street and photograph everything that catches my instincts.

Still letting go.

Still detaching from the outcome.

Still embracing whatever my instinct tells me to shoot.

Whether it's textures, details, lamps, signs, or whatever else appears in front of me.

I'm preserving a space and time.

A record of what Germantown Avenue looked like on June 2nd, 2026.

## **The Beauty of a Compact Camera**

One of the things I wanted to discuss is the technical side of using this camera.

I just popped on the red filter because I want to separate parts of the scene from the sky and increase that dramatic monochrome rendering.

What's so cool about using a compact camera like this is being able to throw it around and make photographs extremely intuitively and quickly.

The beauty of the Ricoh system is that when you're using small JPEGs and embracing contrast, grit, and grain, you begin to understand exactly what aesthetic output you're looking for.

I'm interested in the physicality of photography.

LaserJet prints.

Copy paper.

Cheap, disposable, ephemeral work.

I'm not caught up in everything needing to be perfect.

Even with small JPEGs and crop mode enabled, I've tested large-format prints successfully.

For example, I'll see a church tower and instantly switch to the 50mm crop mode.

Photograph.

Back to 28mm.

Macro mode.

Back again.

The camera makes all of this effortless.

That's what makes projects like this possible.

### **Documentation Is a Technical Problem**

The reason I'm talking about technicalities is because my interest in documentation is actually very technical.

Less theoretical.

Less philosophical.

It's simple.

I'm trying to capture the fleeting change of life.

The technical output of these small JPEG files—around 4 megabytes each—is incredible for an archival system.

They upload quickly.

They import quickly.

They download instantly.

I think I have somewhere around 400,000 photographs in my archive, and the entire thing only takes up around 1.6 terabytes.

Even my public archive of roughly 15,000 photographs only occupies around 60 gigabytes.

When I think about where photography is today—in 2026—with compact digital cameras, tiny file sizes, and immediate output from simple home printers, it's honestly kind of unreal.

I hesitate to call it revolutionary.

But it's definitely innovative.

The more I think about the technical side of what I'm doing, the more amazed I become by how frictionless everything has become.

## **Flux and the Automated Archive**

When I get home, I import my photos extremely quickly.

I actually go through the images on my iPhone.

Bluetooth transfer works through the GR World app, but honestly, the SD card reader is much faster.

I can finish shooting, reach the end of the street, import everything, and begin culling before I even arrive at the studio.

Then the photographs enter my Flux system.

And that's where things get really exciting.

Flux automatically:

- Collects metadata
- Organizes everything chronologically
- Stores GPS coordinates

- Generates project pages
- Creates PDFs
- Aligns gutters
- Adds captions
- Produces QR codes
- Creates downloadable ZIP archives
- Generates clickable maps

The entire publishing pipeline happens automatically.

I find the technicality of this unbelievably exciting.

It's never been easier to photograph, publish, archive, and document your city.

## **A New Way of Photographing**

What I'm trying to push toward is a new way of archiving.

A new way of photographing.

Embracing:

- Compact cameras
- Small file sizes
- Automation
- Frictionless publishing

The goal is simple:

All I need to do is move my body through the world and make photographs.

Flux handles the rest.

Eventually I want to train my entire archive, tag everything automatically, build hierarchies, organize what stays and what gets removed, sequence projects, edit books, and handle the entire publishing process without my intervention.

*My personal dream is to have the culling, editing, sequencing, and archiving happen completely hands-free.*

As someone making around 1,000 photographs a day, I have to think about these problems.

Otherwise I'll dig myself a photographic grave.

## **Post-Digital Photography**

What I'm really trying to build is a post-digital workflow.

I embrace fast digital processes.

But the end result becomes physical.

Tangible.

Right now my system detects when 36 new photographs have been added.

It automatically assembles them into a zine.

Chronological.

Organized.

Ready to print.

The output is timestamped with the location, date, time, and place of every frame.

And when printed on ordinary copy paper, the photographs develop a strange aesthetic quality.

Almost film-like.

Not film.

But something adjacent to it.

Some weird hybrid.

Digital film.

Whatever that means.

I just know I enjoy it.

## **The End Goal**

My ultimate goal is simple.

Make photographs.

Upload photographs.

Let the system handle everything else.

Eventually I want Flux to trigger my printer automatically.

I come home.

A fresh stack of 36 photographs is already waiting.

Ready to staple.

Ready to enjoy.

A new book made from today's walk.

Every single day.

*All I'm doing is photographing, and Flux handles the rest.*

It's a radical idea.

A strange idea.

But it's the photography system I want to build.

Maybe it's what photography looks like after the digital era.

Maybe it's just my own obsession.

Either way, I'm following it.

And honestly...

Imagine if Eugene Atget was a YouTuber sharing his thoughts while walking through Paris.

Imagine if Socrates had a GoPro.

Anyway.

Back to the street.

Time to continue photographing.

This is probably the most boring video I've ever made.