

The Mystery of the Mundane

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

Today I'm thinking about discovering new things through the medium of photography, and how I treat photography as a way for me to learn about the mundane.

I have no idea if the GoPro picks this up, but look at the beauty of the way the light peers through the leaves.

Today I'm shooting with the Ricoh GR monochrome using the high-contrast black-and-white small JPEG file. I've got the red filter on, macro mode enabled, and my aperture set to **f/8**. Everything else is automatic—AV mode, auto ISO, and all the rest.

I'm simply exploring the way light touches my camera sensor.

When I put the camera up to a surface and make a photograph, what interests me is the way that light and life render upon the sensor and give me a surprise inside the frame.

I'm curious about the way light emanates through the lens. I'm curious about the way life and light simply render themselves into an image.

As I photograph, I'm discovering something.

Photography as a Tool for Curiosity

When I look at the way light peers between the leaves and interacts with a surface, I'm seeing it with my eyes—but what I get back in the photograph is ultimately a surprise.

That's what fascinates me.

I'm curious about the way light and life are interpreted through photography, and I use the medium as a way to cultivate an insatiable sense of curiosity about everything around me.

The simple message is this:

Life isn't necessarily what it seems. Through photography, you can sometimes peer beyond what your naked eye sees.

When I look at the patterns and intricacies of tiny leaves, details in trees, and the way light interacts with things, I become more grateful for the moment.

I find myself falling in love with life.

And I find more joy in the act of making pictures because I'm not trying to make something that is purely descriptive. I'm not trying to create photographs from a place of total control or certainty.

I'm trying to surprise myself.

Seeking Surprise Instead of Control

Every day I'm looking for new ways to articulate the mundane.

I wish I could show you the result, but by looking at life and paying attention to the simple way light renders upon my camera sensor, I find myself returning to photography again and again.

Whether you're photographing plants in nature or making pictures in a bustling city, think about the fact that photography is ultimately an abstraction of reality.

As much as you're looking, seeing, and responding, it's the camera that's interpreting light and reality.

The surprise that arises in my frames is what fuels my curiosity and joy for life beyond the medium itself.

So seek surprises.

That's what I'm seeking—surprises that lie beyond the obvious. Beyond what I think I'm looking at. Beyond what I think I'm photographing.

I try to relinquish control as much as possible and allow the way my camera interprets the world to surprise me.

Creative Freedom Through Constraint

There are technical constraints that help me achieve this.

I only shoot small JPEGs.

I crank the contrast to the maximum.

I use automatic settings.

I experiment with macro mode.

I get extremely close.

I look at the light.

I simply observe the way it interacts with a surface.

I could spend a huge amount of time photographing a single plant.

There are infinite ways to articulate the mundane when you give yourself an extreme constraint.

And I find that incredibly liberating.

When I subtract more, I add more.

By subtracting the superfluous aspects of photography—color, control over camera settings, post-processing, and even file size—I find that I thrive creatively.

Within those constraints, I feel free.

And because of that freedom, I can return to photography every single day.

Falling in Love With Life Again

I'm sharing this openly because maybe this idea resonates with you.

Maybe you also want to look at the mundane in a new way.

Maybe you want to find yourself falling in love with life again through the way you interact with the medium.

If so, join me.

Check out the website. The link is in the description. Visit the Learn section. I've got a Ricoh GR course and plenty of resources to help you get started.

But for now—

Wow.

This is so magical.

The mystery of the mundane.