

## Flux Archive 005 — Follow the Light

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

Welcome to **Flux Archive #5**, where I look at some of the photographs I've made throughout the past few years. Today we're looking at a body of work from **2023**, and I want to share some of the things I've learned along my journey of practicing black and white photography.

### Light Becomes the Subject

One of the most impactful realizations I've had is that **light becomes the subject**.

I love focusing on light because I'm no longer dependent on the content of the frame to elevate a photograph. The simple way light falls upon a person can transform an ordinary moment into something transcendental.

By shooting in high-contrast black and white, exposing for the highlights and crushing the shadows, abstraction becomes a solution to finding meaning in the mundane.

Since adopting this workflow, I've found much more joy and possibility in my photography.

I can stand in the tunnels beneath City Hall and simply watch the way light falls across someone's face, or notice the glint of a necklace catching the light, and suddenly those small details become worth photographing.

I'm no longer waiting for extraordinary events to happen.

Simple gestures.

Light.

Shadow.

These things create mystery and elevate the ordinary into something extraordinary.

## **Follow the Light**

Light is my subject.

By following the light, I find infinite ways to photograph.

The light is always changing. Whether it's beautiful golden light illuminating a portrait of my mother or the soft overcast light falling across workers on the street, there's always something new to observe.

When you strip away the complexity of photography and focus on **light, shape, and form**, the details become much more prominent.

A person's back covered in scratches and scars.

A silhouette emerging from darkness.

Simple scenes suddenly become mysterious because black and white abstracts reality.

That's what keeps photography exciting for me.

## **Curiosity Changes Everything**

When I photograph something, I'm curious about how life will look once it's interpreted through the camera.

How will the light travel through the lens?

How will the sensor translate the world?

That curiosity keeps me practicing.

A friend smoking a cigarette could seem completely mundane.

But when I'm curious about what light will do to that scene, I make the photograph anyway.

The same goes for a fire hydrant exploding beside a Mr. Softy truck.

These ordinary situations become exciting again because I'm no longer photographing the object itself.

I'm photographing the way light transforms it.

Photography keeps me curious about life.

That's one of the things I'm most grateful for.

### **The World Is Your Canvas**

I think about the world as my canvas.

The camera is simply my brush.

Everything around me becomes material.

Footprints pressed into concrete.

Repetitive architectural patterns.

Windows.

Textures.

I'm looking beneath my feet.

I'm looking above my head.

Everything around me becomes fascinating.

## **Learning the Vertical Frame**

Lately I've been making many more vertical photographs with the Ricoh GR.

One simple technique I've found is holding the camera with my **middle finger on the shutter** and my thumb supporting the camera underneath.

This lets me rotate into a vertical composition naturally without awkwardly twisting my wrist.

Sometimes a horizontal frame is the right decision.

Other times a vertical frame simplifies the photograph.

A single figure.

A gesture.

A tattoo on someone's arm.

Vertical compositions often remove unnecessary distractions and strengthen the subject.

The Ricoh makes this transition feel effortless, and it's opened up new compositional possibilities for me.

## **Experiment More**

These photographs from Rome reminded me how important experimentation is.

Sometimes I'm photographing gestures at the Trevi Fountain.

Other times I'm stepping far away from my subjects instead of working close.

I'm photographing architecture.

Landscapes.

Textures.

Posters.

Macro details.

Removing the viewfinder from the equation encourages me to move the camera freely.

I can extend my arm, get close to a surface, photograph textures, and experiment with perspectives that wouldn't feel natural using a traditional viewfinder camera.

I encourage you to play more.

Don't lock yourself into one way of seeing.

## **Layering From Back to Front**

The final photograph in this collection was made at the Colosseum.

I wanted to make a photograph that felt layered, but layering doesn't mean adding more complexity.

It's often about removing distractions so the important elements become stronger.

For this photograph, I first chose the Colosseum as my anchor.

Then I noticed the striking shadow stretching across the promenade.

I returned to this location multiple times because I knew the light was strongest around midday and there was consistent foot traffic.

I framed the Colosseum first.

Then I waited for the shadow to organize the middle of the frame.

Finally, I waited for a woman to walk into the foreground and complete the composition.

*Many of my favorite layered photographs are built from back to front.*

The background becomes the first decision.

The midground becomes the second.

The foreground becomes the final piece of the puzzle.

That's how this photograph came together.

## **Keep Following the Light**

The more I practice, the more I realize photography doesn't have to be complicated.

Follow the light.

Stay curious.

Experiment.

Everything around you has the potential to become a meaningful photograph.

If you enjoyed this body of work, you can download and print the **Flux Archive 005** PDF using the link in the description.

You can also submit **36 photographs** through the Flux Generator for the opportunity to have your work reviewed in a future **Flux Weekly Witness** episode.

If you'd like to join the Flux community, click the **Join** button on the YouTube channel to gain access to the Discord.

Thank you for reading.

Peace.