

Flux Archive 006 — Follow the Gesture

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

Welcome to **Flux Archive #6**, where I look at some of my photography and share a few lessons I've learned along the way.

Today we're looking at photographs I made throughout **Rome in 2023**, and I want to talk about **gesture** in street photography and the power of photographing somewhere new.

The Power of Novelty

I spent around two months in Rome.

I'm actually a dual citizen between the United States and Italy, and I have cousins and extended family living in Napoli and Rome. It feels like my second home, so I spent time reconnecting with my roots while photographing throughout the Eternal City.

Rome is overflowing with beauty.

Architecture.

Churches.

Sculptures.

History.

When you arrive somewhere like this, it can almost become overwhelming.

Where do you look?

Where do you begin?

I've found that the simplest solution is to stop chasing spectacular scenes and start looking at **gesture**.

Gesture Is Everywhere

Whether it's someone sleeping on the street...

A dress blowing in the wind...

Feet moving across cobblestones...

Or someone looking up toward the sky...

Gesture is everywhere.

You don't need something extraordinary to make an interesting photograph.

The smallest movement can completely transform an ordinary scene.

The way someone holds their hands.

The direction of a gaze.

A slight turn of the body.

Those simple moments create tension, elegance, and mystery.

They're what trigger me to raise the camera.

Photograph the Movement

When I photograph in busy places, I'm not necessarily looking for obvious moments.

I'm looking at the movement of people.

How they walk.

How they stand.

How they interact with each other.

Sometimes it's simply a blanket blowing in the wind between two buildings.

There aren't crowds.

There isn't action.

There's just movement.

And that's enough.

Let Gesture Guide the Composition

During Ferragosto I photographed a young girl reaching for a bucket through a doorway.

That reaching gesture became the center of interest.

The doorway simply emphasized it.

Another frame shows two men sitting on a stairway.

One of them turns and looks directly toward me.

That eye contact creates the photograph.

Elsewhere, a man walks through the foreground while a young girl stands illuminated in the background.

The gestures.

The movement.

The direction they're facing.

Those relationships elevate an otherwise ordinary scene.

Embrace Imperfection

In Ostia I photographed people along the beach.

Many of these photographs were made loosely from the hip.

I wasn't chasing technical perfection.

I was responding instinctively.

A man's hands.

A girl reaching into the sand.

A tilted horizon.

The movement of the body against the landscape.

Sometimes those imperfect frames carry more energy because they're made from instinct instead of calculation.

Photograph From Every Distance

Gesture doesn't only exist up close.

Sometimes I drop low and photograph someone walking across rocks.

Other times I step back and photograph someone playing football from far away.

The distance changes.

The gesture remains.

No matter where I stand, movement continues to be the thing I'm responding to.

Build Relationships Between Gestures

One of my favorite photographs from this series shows a young boy walking from the water while an older woman climbs slowly from the sea behind him.

The youthful energy.

The older body struggling upward.

Those two gestures create tension.

The relationship between them is what makes the photograph interesting.

That relationship also informed my decision to frame vertically.

The composition emerged because I noticed the connection between those two subjects.

Every Gesture Matters

Another photograph begins with a tattoo of Mary.

That was my first point of interest.

But I didn't stop there.

I also paid attention to the people moving throughout the background.

A woman bending over.

People playing in the water.

Their gestures complete the photograph.

Every layer contributes to the final image.

The Street Photographer Salute

One gesture I've noticed over and over again is people shielding their eyes from the sun.

I call it **the street photographer salute**.

Whenever someone raises their hand to block the sunlight...

I'm almost always triggered to make a photograph.

It's such a simple gesture, but it's full of expression.

Gesture Exists Beyond People

Gesture isn't limited to living subjects.

A sculpture.

An advertisement.

A shadow.

A blanket blowing in the wind.

They all contain movement.

They all communicate emotion.

One photograph I made in Florence focuses entirely on a sculpture.

The tension of the arms.

The gaze.

The hands covering the face.

Studying great works of art is also studying gesture.

Trust Your Instincts

Ultimately, photographing gesture is about being present.

You have to trust your instincts.

When you notice a glance...

A hand movement...

A kiss on a park bench...

Respond immediately.

Don't overthink it.

The more aware you become of these small moments, the more naturally they'll begin to reveal themselves.

Gesture is everywhere.

You simply have to learn to see it.

If you'd like to download and print this body of work, you can find the PDF in the description below.

You can also submit your own **36-frame Flux issue** using the Flux Generator for the opportunity to have your work reviewed on the channel.

If you'd like to join the Flux community, click the **Join** button below to gain access to our Discord, where photographers share their work and discuss the craft together.

Thank you for reading.

Peace.