

Flux Weekly Witness #12: Two Weeks Against Pretty (Sivert Almvik Review)

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

Today we're looking at **Two Weeks Against Pretty** by **Sivert Almvik** from Oslo, Norway. `:contentReference[oaicite:0]{index=0}`

Sivert submitted this project with a description explaining that he intentionally set out to make photographs he **didn't want to show anybody**.

Photographs that weren't pretty.

Photographs that weren't well composed.

Photographs that he hated.

The goal wasn't to make better photographs.

The goal was to challenge himself, reset the way he thinks, and become comfortable feeling like he was doing something wrong.

Alongside the work, he wrote a manifesto that I'll include in the description of this video because I think it's worth reading in full.

I even printed it out here so we can go through it together.

The Anti-Pretty Manifesto

Looking through the work, you immediately notice the haphazard compositions.

Tilted horizons.

Awkward framing.

Subjects pushed into the corners.

Overlapping elements.

Everything intentionally works against conventional ideas of "good" composition.

Sivert begins his manifesto by declaring:

Pretty is my opponent.

Not the technical.

Not the composed.

Not the planned.

Those are merely symptoms.

Pretty is the disease.

He continues:

The pretty is the image that asks to be liked.

The pretty is the image I dare to show.

The pretty is the image I already know works.

And for two weeks, he committed to creating photographs he **did not want to show anyone.**

The Rules

His project had clear constraints.

- Photograph at least five days each week.
- Shoot for a minimum of one hour every session.
- Use one camera: the Nikon Zf.
- Use one lens: the 28mm.
- No other cameras.
- No other focal lengths.
- Never look at the rear screen during a session.
- Don't delete photographs until the project is complete.
- Walk unfamiliar routes—or familiar routes at unfamiliar times.
- Get closer than feels comfortable.
- Don't make photographs you already know will work.
- Accept incorrect exposure, focus, and framing as equal outcomes.

He also committed to publishing the work regardless of whether he considered it successful.

The final oath is probably my favorite part:

I swear not to call this an experiment if it fails.

It is a project.

Projects can be bad.

Projects can fail.

Projects can still stand.

Breaking Your Own Habits

This project really resonated with me because it aligns closely with my own philosophy around **Flux**.

It's about embracing imperfection.

Detaching from the outcome.

Not trying to impress yourself or anyone else.

At the end of the day, we all know what makes a technically good photograph.

We've studied the masters.

We've seen the great photobooks.

We understand composition.

We understand light.

We understand timing.

But sometimes all of that knowledge becomes a prison.

When you've photographed for long enough, it's easy to fall into routines.

You know where to stand.

You know what time the light arrives.

You know how to make photographs that work.

And sometimes the only way forward is to intentionally forget everything you know.

To play.

To experiment.

To become uncomfortable again.

Finding Something New

Take this photograph of the dog.

On the surface, it feels awkward.

The subject is pushed into the corner of the frame.

It's not particularly dramatic.

But there are still interesting qualities here.

The leading lines.

The tension created by using the corner of the frame.

The unusual distribution of space.

Maybe these are compositional ideas that never would have emerged if he had been trying to make the perfect photograph.

That's what I appreciate about this project.

It's not about making bad photographs.

It's about discovering possibilities you normally ignore.

Instinct Over Hesitation

One frame that really stood out to me features a mural looking across the frame while a man casually touches his face.

The tension between those two gestures immediately caught my attention.

Then a few photographs later...

There's another frame that completely surprised me.

Honestly, I think this became my favorite photograph in the sequence.

At first glance it feels messy.

Tilted.

Layered.

Imperfect.

But when you slow down and actually study it, there's an incredible amount happening.

The silhouette in the foreground pulls you into the scene.

The sidewalk guides your eye toward the center.

A man walks perfectly through the frame with his arms extended.

Groups of people occupy different layers.

Negative space balances the density of information on the opposite side.

Despite intentionally abandoning formal composition, the photograph somehow becomes incredibly formal.

That's exactly what happens when you stop trying so hard.

Sometimes your instincts produce something far more interesting than your intentions.

The Surprise of Play

That's the beauty of embracing imperfection.

You surprise yourself.

You stop trying to control every outcome.

You simply position your body somewhere in the world...

...and say yes.

Click the shutter.

You never really know what might align.

Some of my favorite photographs have happened exactly like that.

Not because I planned them.

But because I was open enough to receive them.

Letting the Frame Breathe

There are other moments throughout the project that really work.

Slow shutter speeds.

Filled frames.

Unexpected gestures.

Even the final photograph of the Oslo sign contains little compositional surprises.

The tree stump isn't centered.

The umbrella creates an unexpected relationship.

The dark and light areas repeat throughout the frame, creating a subtle rhythm.

These aren't necessarily photographs you would intentionally compose.

But that's exactly why they're interesting.

Why This Project Matters

I genuinely think **Two Weeks Against Pretty** is a powerful exercise.

Not because every photograph succeeds.

But because the project succeeds.

Giving yourself a manifesto.

Creating strict constraints.

Deliberately going against everything you've previously considered good photography.

That's an incredible way to reshape your vision.

Sometimes you don't need another camera.

Or another lens.

Or another photobook.

Sometimes you simply need permission to make work you aren't proud of.

Because somewhere inside those imperfect photographs...

...you might discover something entirely your own.

Huge thanks to Sivert for sharing this work.

I'll leave a link in the description so you can read the manifesto yourself, view the complete project, and even download the catalog.

If you'd like to submit your own work, head over to **Flux**, click the **Tools** tab, and generate your own zine.

Submit **36 photographs**, and if I review and accept the work, it'll be added to the catalog and you'll be invited into the Flux Discord community.

Otherwise, you can always click **Join** here on YouTube to become part of the community directly.

I'm looking forward to seeing more submissions.

Thank you for watching.

I'll see you in the next video.

Peace.