

Why Do We Create? The Philosophy of Street Photography & Radical Detachment

What's poppin', people? It's Dante, currently walking around Philadelphia.

Today I wanted to ponder a simple question:

Why do we create?

Why do we paint, draw, sculpt, record, photograph, write poetry, or express ourselves through art at all?

What's the driving force behind it?

Creating as a Response to Mortality

I think there's something deeply existential about it.

Life has an inevitable timeline. We all know where it ends.

Maybe we create because we're trying, in some small way, to **immortalize our lives**.

Maybe every photograph, painting, song, or journal entry is our attempt to push back against that reality.

Maybe we all seek to live forever.

And so we create.

Photography as Presence

For me personally, photography has become less about the photographs.

It's become a way of engaging with the **present moment**.

I've become so radically detached from my photographic output that I sometimes ask myself a strange question:

What if I never actually saw the images?

Would I still photograph?

Would I still walk outside with my camera every day knowing I'd never review a single frame?

I genuinely don't know.

It's a fun thought experiment because it forces you to ask:

Why are you photographing in the first place?

Detaching From the Outcome

Of course the output matters.

We make photographs to express ourselves.

A JPEG can live forever.

A print can hang on a wall.

We can share our work with friends.

Creation naturally wants to become something tangible.

But imagine removing the outcome completely.

If you practiced photography purely for the act itself...

Would you still do it?

I think when you detach yourself from creating **for the result**, you begin to reshape why you create altogether.

Photography Makes Everyday Life Meaningful

I create because it's enjoyable.

Photography simply gives me a beautiful way to spend my days.

Every moment becomes meaningful.

There's always something to notice.

Something to explore.

Something worth paying attention to.

More than anything...

It gets me out the door.

And for that alone, I'm forever grateful for photography.

The Artwork Is the Process

Photography requires your body.

It asks you to move.

To walk.

To explore.

To engage with people.

To visit unfamiliar places.

Whether you make a great photograph almost becomes secondary.

Maybe...

The artwork was never the photograph. Maybe the artwork is the process itself.

What if we treated our lives as living works of art?

That's how I increasingly think about it.

Walking around Philadelphia.

Listening to honking cars.

Watching people pass by.

Hearing birds overhead.

Simply existing inside reality with a camera in my hand.

That experience itself feels deeply fulfilling.

Radical Detachment

Because of that...

I don't worry much anymore.

I'm not worried about the frame.

I'm not worried about composition.

I'm not worried whether people praise what I make.

When you remember that one day you'll die...

Who cares?

You might as well play.

You might as well enjoy yourself.

Once you stop trying to prove your work is worth looking at...

...and instead find fulfillment in the act itself...

I think that's when authentic expression begins.

Then Why Share?

Of course there's a paradox.

If none of it matters...

Why upload to YouTube?

Why build a website?

Why publish books?

Why share anything?

Because I also think every creator secretly hopes someone else will experience what they've made.

I don't think anyone creates entirely in isolation forever.

We naturally want another person on the other side.

Someone to connect with.

That's part of being human.

From Fame to Something Higher

I've been thinking a lot about Achilles.

His name echoes throughout history.

We all seek some version of that.

Glory.

Recognition.

Fame.

The Greeks called it **kleos**.

Today, the internet has become our modern pursuit of kleos.

We publish.

We share.

We hope to be remembered.

But lately I've been wondering:

What if we redirected that pursuit?

Instead of seeking worldly glory...

What if we sought a **divine kleos**?

Instead of asking people to validate our work...

We asked whether what we made pleased God.

That single thought has genuinely changed my life.

Why I Photograph

These days...

I simply want to please God.

I want to dance.

Explore.

Laugh.

Sing.

Jump around with my camera like a big kid.

Maybe that childlike spirit is enough.

Maybe creating from that place is all that's required.

And maybe someone watching this video will begin asking themselves the same question:

Why are you doing what you're doing?

And...

Who are you really doing it for?

Photography, for me, has become a beautiful excuse to experience life more deeply.

To look closely.

To feel deeply.

To be present.

And honestly...

I don't think there's anything wrong with that.

Here we are—the birthplace of America.

Tommy J signed the Declaration of Independence here.

He penned it... or something.

You saw it here first on Flux TV.

Signing out.