

Why I'm Filming on a 480p Handycam in 2026

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

I'm currently on the Schuylkill River Trail here in Philadelphia.

Check it out—a beautiful lamp. We've got water reflecting light.

Today I've just been taking delight in the notion of **surrealism** in photography, videography, and moving images.

Check out the Night Shot.

Whoa.

We're in a movie now.

I'm filming with the **Sony DCR-SR40**, and I've been having a lot of fun exploring this strange, surreal way of seeing.

Beyond Reality

What is surrealism?

I guess it's about going beyond reality. Going beyond the ordinary.

When I look at life, I'm thinking about what life **could be**, not necessarily what reality is.

Whether I'm making a photo or a video, I'm usually thinking about the surprise that can arise inside a frame.

To me, the beauty of photography lies in the imperfections.

It lives in the spontaneous nature of life, light, and the intersection between the world and the camera recording it.

This old CCD sensor creates artifacts that I find endlessly fascinating.

The lens, the sensor, the limitations—everything introduces little imperfections that alter reality in beautiful ways.

The beauty of photography lies in the imperfections.

Why Imperfection Matters More Than Ever

Today we have artificial intelligence.

We can generate almost perfectly flawless imagery.

I was just walking past a steakhouse using these hyper-artificial images for advertising, and it got me thinking.

Maybe the way forward for photographers isn't perfection.

Maybe it's the opposite.

Maybe we should embrace imperfection.

Embrace spontaneity.

Embrace the strange ways cameras interpret the world.

Even with these videos, I'm not trying to make the perfect vlog or build the perfect setup.

I'm just experimenting.

The sky gets so flat.

That dude is thirsty.

I'm using the **800x digital zoom** right now. It's around **8:30 PM**, so there isn't much available light.

I believe this camera records at **480p**.

And honestly...

I love it.

Embrace Play

The idea of the day is simple:

Embrace play.

Not only in the way you photograph, but in the way you think about your work.

If your goal is always to grind harder...

To chase results...

Photography eventually becomes a burden.

But when you stay in a perpetual state of play—almost like being a big kid—you create room for breakthroughs.

You'll enjoy the process more.

And ironically...

I think you'll make stronger work.

Play leads to creative breakthroughs.

Looking for the Frame

Here's a nice layered scene.

Foreground.

Background.

Let's see if I can isolate this subject a little better.

Beautiful water in the distance.

It's honestly surreal.

There's something about the color rendition.

The repeating patterns.

Whoa...

I accidentally opened some menu.

LCD brightness.

No idea what I'm doing.

Night Shot is still hilarious.

It genuinely looks like a horror movie.

Extracting More Than Just Video

Something else I've been experimenting with is extracting as much information from my video files as possible.

I built software on my computer that lets me automatically create:

- Screenshots
- GIFs
- Still photographs
- Moving images

Every MP4 contains so much more than just a video.

That guitarist I filmed a moment ago...

It can remain a video.

Or it can become a GIF.

Or a still frame.

Or something entirely different.

Thinking about video this way feels really exciting.

The possibilities seem endless.

Returning to My Roots

I've been making photographs for over twelve years.

I was around sixteen when I first picked up a camera.

But before photography...

I made videos.

Back in Philadelphia, I lived in Andorra and wandered through Wissahickon filming nature with one of those little Flip cameras.

This Handycam reminds me of that era.

It feels familiar.

Like returning to where everything began.

Why Video Feels Different

Making compositions with video is fascinating.

I can physically move until a subject separates from the background.

I can zoom into tiny details.

I can stabilize the camera and slowly work into scenes.

These are things I can't do with my still camera.

And I think this experiment is going to lead somewhere important.

I can feel it.

Ultimately, that's what I seek.

Creative breakthroughs.

The only way I've ever found them is through experimentation.

Trying new techniques.

Trying things that might fail.

Creative Evolution

I remember being in Tokyo in November 2025.

I started experimenting with the crop mode on my Ricoh.

Making close-up slivers of faces.

Playing with slow shutter speeds.

Those experiments completely changed my work.

That's the feeling I'm chasing again.

I never want to stay the same.

I want to remain inside that perpetual stream of becoming.

Of evolution.

Of change.

Of **flux**.

Maybe video is simply the next evolution of my photography.

Maybe it's the thing that brings me the most joy.

Inspiration Isn't Always Where You Expect

If you're curious where this whole experiment comes from...

Look up "**Me at the Zoo**."

It's the very first YouTube video.

Made by Jawed, one of YouTube's founders.

A tiny clip.

A Handycam.

Nothing fancy.

I think there's something really beautiful about returning to the roots of internet video.

These days I'm not studying Magnum archives.

I'm not watching polished photography videos.

I'm watching **Me at the Zoo**.

I literally have it playing on a CRT television on loop.

That's where I'm finding inspiration.

Sometimes moving forward means returning to the beginning.

Me at the Schuylkill River Trail

So this is my version.

This is me...

...at the Schuylkill River Trail.

I have to remember not to look at the flip-out screen.

I need to look at the lens.

Thanks for watching.

I'll continue sharing these experiments as I keep exploring video, photography, and wherever this path leads.

See you on the other side.